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MEMOIR AND LETTERS

THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH

A MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. SYDNEY SMITH

BY HIS DAUGHTER

LADY HOLLAND

WITH

A SELECTION FROM HIS LETTERS

EDITED BY

MRS AUSTIN

A New Edition

LONDON
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THIS MEMOIR OF MY FATHER,

THE PREPARATION FOR WHICH WAS THE CONSTANT

OCCUPATION OF MY MOTHER'S LIFE,

AND THE COMPLETION OF WHICH WAS THE MOST EARNEST

OBJECT OF HER DESIRE,

BOTH IN HER LIFE AND AT HER DEATH,

WHICH NOTHING BUT HER EARNEST DESIRE COULD HAVE

GIVEN ME COURAGE TO ATTEMPT,

I NOW DEDICATE TO HER MEMORY,

BELIEVING IT

TO BE THE MOST GRATEFUL TRIBUTE I CAN OFFER

ON HER GRAVE.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

SYDNEY SMITH'S Life: he who opens this book under the expectation of reading in it curious adventures, important transactions, or public events, had better close the volume, for none of these things will he find therein.

Nothing can be more thoroughly private and eventless than the narrative I am about to give; yet I feel myself, and I have reason to believe there are many who will feel with me, that this Life is not therefore uninteresting or unimportant: for, though circumstances over which my father had no control forbade his taking that active share in the affairs of his country, for which his talents and his character so eminently fitted him, yet neither circumstances nor power could suppress these talents, or subdue and enfeeble that character; and I believe I may assert, without danger of contradiction, that by them, and the use he has made of them, he has earned for himself a place amongst the great men of his time and country.

Such being the case, however, his talents, and the employment of them, are alone before the world. This is but half the picture; and these very talents, and the use he has made of them, make me believe that few who have known so much do not wish to know more.

The mode of life, the heart, the habits, the thoughts and feelings, the conversation, the home, the occupations of such a man,—all, in short, which can give life and reality to the picture,—are as yet wanting; and it is to endeavour to supply this want that I have ventured to undertake this task.

It is always more difficult to write the life of a private than of a public man. There are many things likewise which make that of my father a peculiarly difficult one to delineate; and I should shrink from the task I have undertaken, from the fear of not doing it justice, had not death made such fearful havoc amongst his early contemporaries, and those best fitted to do justice to his memory; and age, business, or health, placed insuperable obstacles in the way of all those abler pens which both my mother and I had once hoped might undertake it.

I therefore, from these causes, and in accordance with my mother's most earnest desire, repeated in her will, that some record of his virtues should be written, venture to give to the public these recollections of my father, which I had previously been collecting for some years solely for myself and my children, together with numerous contributions from various friends.

With these materials, illustrating the selection of his letters, which my friend Mrs Austin has kindly undertaken to edit, I trust to lay before the public such a record of my father's character, as a son, a clergyman, a father, a husband, and a friend, as may be deemed by them not unworthy of the reputation he has already acquired for talent and honesty by his writings.

If I succeed, I shall have accomplished the object I have most at heart. If I fail, I trust that with many my motive will be some excuse; and that they will attribute it to the inability and inexperience of his advocate, and not to the weakness of the cause.

In giving these annals of my father's life, the object has been, as much as possible, to make him speak for himself, even where (as in some few instances) a portion of them have already appeared before the public; as these extracts serve to weave together the rest of the narrative, and are of course far better than anything I could put in their place.

The points which can alone justify the publication of these recollections and letters are, that they shall neither hurt the living, injure the dead, nor impair the reputation of their author. These objects we have endeavoured most strenuously to keep in view. There is little in the whole work that could give pain, even if every particular were understood. Most of the persons alluded to have been long since dead, and the allusions forgotten. Yet, should there be, in either the letters or the narrative, any anecdote accidentally preserved which may meet the eye of those who, from intimacy with him, or from having been present at the scene described, could lift the veil that has been purposely thrown over it, let me here entreat them, if they loved my father in life, and honour his memory in death, never, by their explanations, to make the pen of Sydney Smith do in death what it never did in life,—inflict undeserved pain on any human being.

I must add, with respect to the letters collected from various sources, that it is a remarkable fact, as testifying the estimation in which my father was held by his contemporaries, that there are among them many small notes merely containing some trifling message or an invitation to dinner; things without the slightest merit or value in themselves, yet carefully folded up, dated, and preserved with the greatest care for years by those who had received them from him. This little trait speaks, I think, volumes. From

these letters Mrs Austin has selected those most calculated to interest the reader, or in any way to illustrate my father's feelings and character, without special reference to their talent only.

It will be seen in the narrative, and, in justice to my father, it ought not to be forgotten, that he entered the Church out of consideration for, and in obedience to, the wishes of his father; and like his friend Dr Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, with a strong natural bias towards another profession; so that, in his passage through life, he had often to exercise control over himself, and to make a struggle to do that which is comparatively easy to those who have embraced their profession from taste and inclination alone.

But having entered the Church from a sense of duty, I think the narrative will show that he made duty his guide through life;—that he honoured his profession, and was honoured in it by those who had the best opportunities of observing him;—that, ever ready to perform its humblest duties, he gathered (as he says) from the study of the Bible, that the highest duty of a clergyman was to calm religious hatreds, and spread religious peace and toleration;—that in this labour of love he exerted himself from early youth to the hour of his death;—and that he dreaded, as the greatest of all evils, that the "golden chain," which he describes as "reaching from earth to heaven," should be injured either by fanaticism or scepticism. Thus, lending himself to no extremes and no party in the Church, he endeavoured through life to guard religion simple and pure, as we received it from the hand of God, and as it is taught in that Church to which he belonged.

It now only remains for me to express my thanks to those who have aided my task by their contributions, which I should gladly have done by name, had they not been too numerous. But it has been deeply gratifying to my feelings, and has given me courage to proceed, to find that all my father's oldest friends have been eager to assist me in my task, and have all, with very few exceptions, contributed something towards it. I trust they may not think I have misused their gifts, and, for the sake of the father, will receive with indulgence the efforts of his daughter to do fresh honour to his memory by chronicling his virtues.

This slight sketch of my father's life has passed through the ordeal of his private friends, and has been pronounced by them to present a faithful picture of his habits and character. The subject of it is of course so deeply interesting to me, that I can form no estimate of what it may be to others; but I am encouraged by these friends to believe that the life of an honest man honestly told,

can never be without some value and interest to every one. In deference therefore to their opinions I now offer this Memoir to the public, with some additions and such corrections as I have been able to make; though I fear there may still remain many errors as to time, inevitable in a narrative written (as this is chiefly) from memory, and with but few data to guide me.

I do not however, I confess, offer this Memoir to the public without some anxiety; not from the fear of any honest opposition to my father's opinions, or censure of the imperfect manner in which I may have performed my task: these are of course open to criticism, and are fair and honourable objects of attack. But I am aware how easily the frank and fearless, because innocent, expressions of my father's conversation may be misunderstood and misrepresented, or the private feelings of my friends wounded, should there be any one ungenerous enough to do so. I will however trust that, as this Memoir has been written with the most earnest desire to tell the truth, but in doing so to avoid giving just cause of pain to any one, I shall meet with equal delicacy from the public; and shall find that any angry feelings which the bold, undisguised expression of my father's opinions during life may have formerly excited in the world, have been long since forgotten, or are buried in the grave of him whose loss I (may I not rather say, we all?) lament.

S. H.

LONDON, *May* 1855.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

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My father, the Rev. Sydney Smith, was born at Woodford, in Essex, 1771, the second of four brothers and one sister, all remarkable for their talents; the two eldest eminently so. To these talents, as well as to his great animal spirits, he had an hereditary right; for my grandfather, Mr Robert Smith, was a man of singular natural gifts; very clever, odd by nature, but still more odd by design. Loving to astonish, and fully aware that knowledge is power, he employed the activity of a very sagacious mind, through a long and varied life, in acquiring a minute acquaintance with the history of all he came in contact with. On becoming early his own master, by the death of his father, and possessed of some money, my grandfather employed all the early part of life (having first married a very beautiful girl, from whom he parted at the church-door, leaving her with her mother, Mrs Olier, till his return from America) partly in wandering over the world for many years; and partly in diminishing his fortune by buying, altering, spoiling, and then selling about nineteen different places in England; till, in his old-age, he at last settled at Bishop's Lydiard, in Somersetshire, where he died.

My grandfather was a very handsome and picturesque old man when I knew him; his hair long, thin, and perfectly white, and his figure slight and rather bent. To add to the effect of his appearance

and manner, he used to affect the drab-coloured dress of a Quaker, with a large flat hat, rather like those of our coal-heavers. This hat was so extraordinary in form, and had seen so many years' service, that when at last he offered its remains to his old factotum Charles, who was digging in his garden, the man, after twisting and twirling it round and round for some time, and examining its proportions, returned it to him with a broad grin, saying, "No, thank your honour, it's no use to I." I remember him sitting in his arm-chair basking in the sun, leaning forward on his crutch-stick, a fine study for Rembrandt; and telling this story of his favourite hat till the tears ran down his cheeks with laughter.

But though the sons inherited talent from their father, yet all the finer qualities of their mind they derived from their mother, Miss Maria Olier,—the youngest daughter of a French emigrant, from Languedoc, who was driven over to England for his religious principles, at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and was reduced to great poverty in consequence. His eldest daughter, Miss Olier, a woman of much intelligence and energy of character, established a school for young ladies in Bloomsbury Square, which acquired considerable celebrity under her direction, and thus enabled her to contribute to the support of her family. My father used to attribute a little of his constitutional gaiety to this infusion of French blood. His maternal grandfather, Mr Olier, I have heard, could not speak a word of English. He married a Miss Maria Barton, who was a collateral descendant of Sir Isaac Newton's, through his mother's second marriage,—a very distinguished ancestor to possess, and one not to be lightly passed over.

My grandmother, Mrs Robert Smith, Mr Olier's youngest daughter, had (I have been told, for I never saw her) a noble countenance, which two of her sons inherited, and as noble a mind. To her early care of them, and to the respect with which her virtues and high tone of feeling inspired their young hearts, may be ascribed much that was good and great in their characters. The charm of her mind and manner extended even to her correspondence. I heard a singular proof of this the other day, from a schoolfellow of my father's, who said that when he or his younger brother Courtenay received one of her letters at Winchester, the schoolboys would often gather round and beg to hear it read aloud. Her influence, however, did not remain to them very long in after-life. Delicate;—with a husband who, though delightful from the charm of his manner and powers of conversation to the world, was not very well suited to domestic life, from his wandering habits;—and with the natural anxiety of a mother about four such sons, often left for long periods entirely to her care and guidance, she fell into ill-health while still young and beautiful, and, to the deep

regret of all who knew her, died about two years after the marriage of my father.

This reminds me of an anecdote of Talleyrand, who, when living as an emigrant in this country, was on very intimate terms with her eldest son, Robert, more generally known by the name given him by his schoolfellows at Eton, of Bobus. The conversation turned on the beauty often transmitted from parents to their children. My uncle, who was singularly handsome (indeed I think I have seldom seen a finer specimen of manly beauty, or a countenance more expressive of the high moral qualities he possessed), perhaps with a little youthful vanity, spoke of the great beauty of his mother; on which Talleyrand, with a shrug, a smile, and a sly disparaging look at my uncle's fine face, as if he saw nothing to admire in it, exclaimed, "Ah! mon ami, c'était donc apparemment Monsieur votre père qui n'était pas bien."

The peculiarities and talents of the young Smiths were very early evinced. Their mother describes them as neglecting games; seizing every hour of leisure for study; and often lying on the floor, stretched over their books, discussing with loud voice and most vehement gesticulation, every point that arose,—often subjects above their years,—and arguing upon them with a warmth and fierceness of manner as if life and death hung upon the issue;—a most interesting and curious spectacle, to a mother justly proud of her boys, and rejoicing in these signs of their future distinction.

They were like young athletes, constantly trying their intellectual strength against each other; "and the result," I have heard my father say, "was to make us the most intolerable and overbearing set of boys that can well be imagined, till later in life we found our level in the world."

As his sons were so nearly of an age, Mr Robert Smith deemed it advisable to separate them at school as much as possible, that there might not be too strong rivalry between them. Robert, the eldest, with Cecil, the third son, were therefore sent to Eton; where Robert distinguished himself greatly, and was one of the four boys (he was then only eighteen) who wrote in the "Microcosm;" Mr Canning, Mr Frere, and Mr John Smith, being the other three.

From Eton he went to King's College, Cambridge, where (says a sketch of him written, I believe, by his friend Lord Carlisle, after his death) "he added materially to the reputation for scholarship and classical composition which he had established at school; and if the most fastidious critics of our day would diligently peruse the three triposes which he composed in Lucretian rhythm, on the three systems of Plato, Descartes, and Newton, we believe that we should not run the least risk of incurring the charge of exaggeration, in declaring that these compositions in Latin verse have not been ex-

celled since Latin was a living language. Be this said with the peace of Milton and Cowley, with the peace of his fellow-Etonians, Grey and Lord Wellesley."

My father was sent as early as six years of age to a school at Southampton (kept by the Rev. Mr Marsh, a scholar of some celebrity), which he always spoke of with pleasure. Whilst there he received much kindness and attention from the family of the present Lady Mildmay, whose friendship he retained from that time, and who still survives her old friend. From thence he was sent, with his youngest brother, Courtenay, to the foundation at Winchester;—a rough and dangerous apprenticeship to the world for one so young; from which Courtenay ran away twice, unable to bear its hardship. My father suffered here many years of misery and positive starvation. There never was enough provided, even of the coarsest food, for the whole school, and the little boys were of course left to fare as they could. Even in old-age my father used to shudder at the recollections of Winchester, and I have heard him speak with horror of the wretchedness of the years he spent there: the whole system was then, my father used to say, one of abuse, neglect, and vice. It has since, I believe, partaken of the general improvement of education. However, in spite of hunger and neglect, he rose in due time to be Captain of the school, and, whilst there, received, together with his brother Courtenay, a most flattering but involuntary compliment from his schoolfellows, who signed a round-robin,* "refusing to try for the College prizes if the Smiths were allowed to contend for them, as they always gained them." He used to say, "I believe, whilst a boy at school, I made above ten thousand Latin verses, and no man in his senses would dream in after-life of ever making another. So much for life and time wasted!"

At school my father was not only leader in learning, but in mischief; and was discovered inventing a catapult by lamplight, and commended for his ingenuity by the master, who little dreamt it was intended to capture a neighbouring turkey, whose well-filled crop had long attracted the attention, and awakened the desires of the hungry urchins. In after-life he was fond of telling an incident which happened to him when either at Winchester or Oxford, I am not sure which. A friend who was making a tour, wrote in great distress, asking him to lend him five guineas. He had but four, which he was conveying himself to the post, much lamenting he had not the sum wanted; when he suddenly saw shining on the high-road before him another guinea, and no owner being to be found to claim it, he with joy inclosed it in another cover to his friend.

* To Dr Warton, then Head Master or Warden of Winchester.

I have heard my father speak of one of the first things that stimulated him in acquiring knowledge during his early school-days. A man of considerable eminence, whose name I cannot recall, found my father reading Virgil under a tree, when all his schoolfellows were at play. He took the book out of his hand, looked at it, patted the boy's head, gave him a shilling, and said, "Clever boy! clever boy! that is the way to conquer the world." This produced a strong impression on the young Sydney. Whilst at Winchester he had been one year Præpositor of the College, and another, Præpositor of the Hall. My father left Winchester, as Captain, for New College, Oxford; where, as such, he was entitled to a Scholarship, and afterwards to a Fellowship. New College was chiefly then renowned for the quantity of port-wine consumed by the Fellows; but the very slender income allowed him by his father, perhaps luckily for my father's health, did not permit him to indulge in such habits. As my father was too proud to accept what he could not return, he lived much out of society, and thus lost one of the advantages of College to a poor man—that of making private friends.

Soon after quitting Winchester, and before he became a fellow of New College, his father sent him to Mont Villiers, in Normandy, where he remained *en pension* for six months, to perfect his knowledge of French, which he always after spoke with great fluency. The fierceness of the French Revolution was then at its height; and for his safety it was thought necessary that he should enrol himself in one of the Jacobin Clubs of the town, in which he was entered as "Le Citoyen Smit, Membre Affilié au Club des Jacobins de Mont Villiers." The only revolutionary peril he encountered, however, was in attending his two friends, Captain Drinkwater and his brother, to Cherbourg. These gentlemen, who were excellent draughtsmen, began sketching the works in spite of my father's remonstrances, who said, "We shall all be infallibly hung on the next lantern-post, if you are seen sketching the fortifications." And in truth, in a few minutes they had a gendarme upon them; and it required all my father's skill, address, and knowledge of the language, with a few good-humoured jokes, and boasts of his own citizenship, to extricate himself and his friends from his hands. When clear off—"And now, my friends, no more sketching, if you please," said he.

I know little of my father's career at college, save that he obtained his Fellowship as soon as it was possible; and from that moment was cast upon his own resources by his father, who never afterwards gave him a farthing till his death. Yet with this small income, about £100 per annum, he not only preserved that honesty, so often disregarded by young men, of keeping out of debt; but undertook

gradually to pay a sum of £30 for a debt incurred when at Winchester School by his younger brother Courtenay, who had not had courage to confess it to his father before his departure for India. Courtenay became Supreme Judge of the Adawlut Court; subsequently made a very large fortune; acquired great reputation as a Judge and an Oriental scholar; returned to this country in his old age, and died suddenly a few years afterwards.

On leaving college it became necessary that my father should select a profession. His own inclinations would have led him to the bar, in which profession he felt that his talents promised him success and distinction, and where a career was open to him that might gratify his ambition. But his father (who had been at considerable expense in bringing up his eldest brother Robert to that profession, and fitting out the other two for India), after giving up a project he once had of sending Sydney as supercargo to China, urged so strongly his going into the church, that my father, after considering the subject deeply, felt it his duty to yield to my grandfather's wishes, and sacrifice his own, by entering the church; and became a curate in a small village called Netherhaven, in the midst of Salisbury Plain, in the year 1794.

Sydney Smith, a curate in the midst of Salisbury Plain! To those who knew him, and his cast of character, the mere statement of the fact will be enough to paint his feelings; but to those who knew him not, it would be difficult to express the famine of the mind that came over him when planted in that great waste of Nature. He has himself described a curate as "the poor working-man of God—a learned man in a hovel, good and patient—a comforter and a teacher—the first and purest pauper of the hamlet; yet showing that, in the midst of worldly misery, he has the heart of a gentleman, the spirit of a Christian, and the kindness of a pastor."

This picture can hardly be heightened, as descriptive of a curate in the abstract. But here was a curate formed, by his wit and powers of conversation, for the society of his fellow-creatures, doomed to the most unbroken solitude; and, pauper as he was, with scarcely a hamlet to interest him, for the village consisted but of a few scattered cottages and farms, in the midst of Salisbury Plain.

My father seems to have entered into his curacy, as he did at a later period into his parsonage-house at Foston, amidst the discomforts of brick and mortar, and with new-plastered walls, &c.; for he writes, saying, "The extreme heat of the summer has dried the walls, and the smell of paint is nearly gone." The curacy too, even when repaired, and in its best garb, must have been a most uninviting spot; for just before leaving it he says, "I have not yet got a successor. A gentleman curate called to-day to survey the place

and premises, but galloped away in two minutes, with every mark of astonishment and antipathy." Once a week a butcher's cart came over from Salisbury; it was then only he could obtain any meat, and he often dined, he said, on a mess of potatoes, sprinkled with a little ketchup. Too poor to command books, his only resource was the Squire, during the few months he resided there; and his only relaxation, not being able to keep a horse, long walks over those interminable plains.

In one of these solitary walks my father narrowly escaped with his life, being overtaken in the midst of the Plain, far from any habitation, by a violent snow-storm; and, having lost all means of tracing his way, there being no trees or vestige of human habitation for miles round to guide him, it was by mere chance that he arrived, late at night, and fearfully exhausted, at his own home.

On one occasion, when going to visit his father, he says, "I walked twenty-six miles, and then got into a coach which overtook me." He mentions here a comical instance of the love of change in my grandfather, Mr Robert Smith,—a taste which has been before alluded to. "When I arrived at the mansion of Beauchamp, I found a large mud-wall instead of a gate, and every path and avenue to the house entirely obliterated. I procured a guide and got into the parlour, where I found my father, immeasurably delighted at having puzzled me by his improvements."

My father seems to have entered upon his curacy, in 1794, with every wish to improve both himself and his parish. He writes, declining a visit, saying, "My theological studies will necessarily occupy a great deal of my time, and I mean to try if I cannot persuade the poor people to come to church; for really at present (as was said of Burke at Hastings' trial) 'my preaching is like the voice of one crying in the wilderness.'" Shortly after, writing to Mrs Beach in reference to this subject, he says:—

"Madam,—In our conversations about the poor at Netherhaven, you agreed with me that some of the boys and girls might possibly be prevented from attending church, or the Sunday school, from a want of proper clothing. On Sunday last there were three or four children with their feet on the cold stones, without any shoes; and one came, a perfect *sans-culotte*, or at least with only such grinning remnants of that useful garment as were just sufficient to show that he was so clad from necessity, and not from any ingenious theory he had taken up against a useful invention. If the Sunday school had begun, I should have imagined that the poor boy thought it his duty to come ready for whipping, as a fowl is sent from the poulterer's trussed and ready for roasting. In whatsoever manner, to whatsoever extent, you may choose to alleviate this species of misery, be so good as to remember that I am on the spot, and shall

be happy to carry your benevolent intentions into execution in the best manner I am able."

And again, in January, 1796, he writes :—

"Madam,—Immediately on my return from my father's, I proceeded to organize your school of industry. I have selected one girl from every family in the parish, whose poverty entitled them to such relief. They amount to twenty. I have set them, first of all, upon making a coarse canvas-bag each, to hold their work in; which bags will be numbered, and hung up round the room when they leave school. We have divided the week between darning, sewing, and knitting; spinning is postponed for the present. I have weighed out materials to Mr Bendam; his salary is fixed at four shillings per week, and firing. I shall attend closely to your new seminary while I stay, and shall before my departure write down and submit to you such regulations as I think conducive to the welfare of that and the Sunday school. You have no idea of the emulation the master has inspired them with. All the while I was at my father's there was not a single child absent."

On leaving his curacy in 1797, one of the first professional duties he was called upon to perform was to marry his eldest brother Robert to Miss Vernon, aunt to the present Lord Lansdowne. In December, 1797, he writes word from Bowood :—"They have sent for me here, to marry my brother to Miss Vernon, daughter of Lady Ossory and Mr Vernon." He adds :—"I would write more, but it is dinner-time, and Lord Lansdowne gives such good dinners that they are to be by no means neglected; and especially not by such an epicure as me."*

In a letter to his mother on the occasion of my uncle's marriage to Miss Vernon, my father says :—"The marriage took place in the library at Bowood, and all I can tell you of it is that he cried, she cried, and I cried." The only tears I believe this marriage ever produced, save those we shed on her grave.

During the period of my father's curacy, the Squire, after the good old orthodox fashion of squires, often asked his curate to dinner on Sunday; and, to his surprise, had found the tedium of a Sunday evening in the country so much beguiled by the society of his young friend, that the invitations became more and more frequent. This acquaintance soon ripened into friendship; and ended by Mr Beach requesting my father to resign his curacy at the termination of the two years, and accompany his eldest son abroad. Here my father best paints what happened.

"When first I went into the Church, I had a curacy in the middle

* Rendered the more striking, perhaps, by the contrast they afforded to his own homely fare just described.

of Salisbury Plain; the parish was Netherhaven, near Amesbury. The Squire of the parish, Mr Beach, took a fancy to me, and after I had served it two years, he engaged me as tutor to his eldest son, and it was arranged that I and his son should proceed to the University of Weimar, in Saxony. We set out; but before reaching our destination, Germany was disturbed by war, and, in stress of politics, we put into Edinburgh, where I remained five years. The principles of the French Revolution were then fully afloat, and it is impossible to conceive a more violent and agitated state of society."

The expedition to the University of Weimar being thus frustrated, my father and his young pupil, accompanied by their German courier Mithoffer, set off for Edinburgh. I have lately been most kindly furnished with all the letters my father wrote to Mr and Mrs Beach during his residence there with their sons; and though they will add nothing to his reputation for talent, and may not have much general interest, as they refer chiefly to his intercourse with his pupils and his observations on their characters, yet his views on the education of young men cannot be without their value. And as it is my object in these pages to paint my father in every relation of life, I do not think that one in which (instead of the common bargain of Greek and Latin for salary on these occasions) he seems to have placed himself so completely *in loco parentis*, not only in name, but in spirit and affection, ought to be entirely passed over. I shall therefore make such selections from these letters as may best effect my object, and likewise show his early impressions on first entering the world; placing them here rather than amongst the general correspondence, as they refer solely to this period of his life. And I do this with the less scruple, as my readers have the remedy in their own hands, should they find me dull. In writing an account of their progress to Edinburgh, my father says:—

"We stayed at Warwick Castle, Sunday, slept there, and set off Monday after breakfast; having experienced from Lord Warwick* the most hospitable reception. The merry yeomen of Warwickshire and Birmingham are all drunk. Their colours have been presented to-day: as they manufacture their own buttons, spurs, and swords, they are prodigiously fine. You consider me of a very impatient disposition: I wish you had seen me this evening sitting out a Birmingham play; no leaden statue could have been so immovable. We had two 'Rule Britannias,' three 'God save the Kings,' and four other songs about Britons. Michael seemed very much pleased. With Matlock I was enchanted, but Nature, who never yet made a clever fellow without making half-a-dozen blockheads by way of compensation, or a beautiful place without some

* Brother-in-law to Mr Robert Smith.

correspondent desolation, made us refund in the road from Bakewell to Disley all the pleasure we had experienced at Matlock. We proceeded through a scandalous country to Buxton. That any but felonious, larcenous culprits, sent there by order of a court of justice, should be found convened together in Buxton, is to me a matter of most profound astonishment. The water I maintained to be common water. I doubted very much, in passing over the road, whether I should put myself to death or go to sleep; but during the debate I unconsciously adopted the latter, and so the matter was settled.

"We have met with great politeness at Birmingham and Manchester. At Birmingham we dined with a democratic weaver of corduroys, who complained of the ruin of their business. His claret was however extremely good; and he politely escorted us over the chief part of the manufactories of the place the next morning. Liverpool exhibits a wonderful scene of activity and enterprise. From thence to the Lakes; I think Derwentwater the prettiest, Ulleswater the grandest lake. I was particularly struck with the mountains that border parts of Windermere. I prefer Lord W. Gordon's place upon Derwentwater to Mr Curwen's on Windermere; and quarrel with the alehouse simplicity of the Duke of Norfolk's. People mistake this matter of simplicity strangely. Is it necessary to sit upon boards painfully hard, and put your feet upon malthouse floors, because you retire to a beautiful lake for two or three of the hot months of the year? There is surely some medium between mud and marble, and huckaback and brocade!

"Off we set, Michael, the guide, and myself, at one in the morning, to gain the summit of Skiddaw. I, who find it rather difficult to stick upon my horse on the plainest roads, did not find that facility increased by the darkness of the morning, or the precipitous path we had to ascend. I made no manner of doubt but that I should roll over into the town of Keswick the next morning, and be picked up by the town beadle, dead in a gutter. Moreover I was moved a little for my reputation; for, as I had a bottle of brandy in my pocket, placed there by the special exhortations of the guide and landlord, the Keswick coroner and jury would infallibly have brought me in 'a parson as died of drinking.' However, onward we moved, and arrived at the summit. The thermometer stood at twenty; the wind was bitter, and the summit totally enveloped in thick clouds, which nearly wetted us through, and totally cut off all view of the sun and the earth too. Here we regaled on biscuit and brandy, and waited for the dissipation of the vapour. The guide seemed to be about as much affected by the weather as Skiddaw itself; which mountain, in height and brownness of complexion, he something resembled. I was rueful enough, though I really rejoiced

in the novelty of the scene; but a more woe-begone, piteous face than Michael put on, you never saw. No tailor, tried, cast, and condemned for filching small parcels of cloth, ever looked so unhappy. The wind, the complaisant wind, now puffed away the vapours at intervals, and gave us a hasty view in different quarters, of the magnificent scene which surrounded us. Above us was the blue heaven, and all under were the sons of men, scattered in fair cities, and upon hills and down in the dales, and over the whole face of the earth. And so we went down, and Michael grew warm and ate a monstrous breakfast, and was quite pleased with his excursion, and all was well.

"The country on our way here was abominable; the inns bad, the postchaises dirty, everything indicative of vermin and want. With Edinburgh I am delighted as surprised, though it is offensive to the nose as it is delightful to the eye. No smells were ever equal to Scotch smells; it is the school of physic. Yet the place is uncommonly beautiful, and I am in a constant balance between admiration and trepidation.

'Taste guides my eye where'er new beauties spread,
While prudence whispers, Look before you tread!'"

Speaking of the modes of conveyance, he says:—"Do not form your ideas of chaises in Scotland and the north of England from what you see in the south. The chance is of not getting them at all, or getting them in so wretched a state that it is not only discreditable and inconvenient, but positively unsafe, to ride in them. We were put into chaises with half a bottom, with no glasses to the windows or fastenings to the door; and we not unfrequently might have been taken for a party of convicted Scotchmen on our road to Newgate."

CHAPTER II.

Arrives at Edinburgh.—State of Society.—Manners of Scotch.—Anecdote of Mr Jeffrey.—Acquaintance with Mr Horner.—Marriage.—Early Difficulties and Poverty.—Generosity.—Birth of Daughter.—Introduces Mr Allen to Lord Holland.—Originates "Review."—State of Society.—State of Church.—Character of his Writings in Youth.—Sketch of Opinions at the Time.—Letter by Lord Monteagle.—Short Sketch of Articles in "Review."

IN the year 1797, the period, I believe, at which my father arrived in Edinburgh with his pupil, Mr Beach, that city was rich in talent, full of men who have acted important parts whilst they lived, and many of whom have left names that will live after them:—Jeffrey, Horner, Playfair, Walter Scott, Dugald Stewart, Brougham, Allen, Brown, Murray, Leyden, Lord Webb Seymour, Lord Woodhouselee,* Alison, Sir James Hall, and many others.

Society at that time in Edinburgh was upon the most easy and agreeable footing. The Scotch were neither rich nor ashamed of being poor, and there was not that struggle for display which so much diminishes the charm of London society, and has, with the increase of wealth, now crept into that of Edinburgh. Few days passed without the meeting of some of these friends, either in each other's houses, or (in what was then very common) oyster-cellars; where, I am told, the most delightful little suppers used to be given, in which every subject was discussed, with a freedom impossible in larger societies, and with a candour which is only found where men fight for truth and not for victory.

Into this soil, then, so congenial to his mind and tastes, my father was transplanted; and, though a perfect stranger, the kindness with which he was received is best shown by the strong attachment he ever retained for his Scotch friends, though far removed from them in after life, and by the pleasure with which he always looked back to this period, which he often refers to in his letters. In one of them he exclaims, "When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days passed there, amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings!" I believe he kept up, with hardly any exception, the friendships then formed; and I heard an incident the other day which, trifle as it was, showed such affection for my father's memory that it quite touched me. One

* Father of the historian Mr Patrick F. Tytler.

evening my father was at his old friend Lord Woodhouselee's country-house, near Edinburgh, when a violent storm of wind arose, and shook the windows so as to annoy everybody present and prevent conversation. "Why do you not stop them?" said my father; "give me a knife, a screw, and a bit of wood, and I will cure it in a moment;" he soon effected his purpose, fixed up his little bit of wood, and it was christened *Sydney's button.* Fifty years after, one of the family finding Mr Tytler papering and painting this room, exclaimed, "Oh! James, you are surely not touching Sydney's button?" but on running to examine the old place at the window, she found Sydney's button was there, preserved and respected amidst all the changes of masters, time, and taste.

Soon after the arrival of my father, his pupil, and Mithoffer, the German courier, in Edinburgh, my father writes to Mrs Beach:—

"*Edinburgh, July 15th*, 1798.

"My dear Madam,

"We are just removed into our new lodgings, No. 38 Hanover Street, where we are very conveniently, pleasantly, and, for Edinburgh, cheaply lodged. Our situation is in the centre of the finest street I have yet seen in Great Britain, and commands a view of the Firth shipping and opposite shore. We have the whole floor, a kitchen, a servant, and all furniture found us, for about £2, 1s. a-week. The boarding tables are very objectionable here; and Mithoffer and myself make out extremely well in housekeeping.

"I am quite satisfied with Michael. He makes every effort in his power to improve himself. Occasionally his dislike of study makes him a little slow and careless, but a word sets everything to rights."

Speaking of some of their first acquaintances in Edinburgh, he mentions "Lord Webb Seymour, whom we both like very much; Mr Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy in this University, and I believe generally considered to be one of the first men in it; and Mr Dalzel, Greek Professor, of whom we have as yet seen but little." Shortly after he says:—"We have added to our acquaintance Mr and Lady Charlotte Hope. Mr Hope * is a gentleman of eminence at the Scotch Bar, and appears to be a plain, sensible man; Lady Charlotte, a daughter of Lord Hopetoun's, is a charming woman." A few months after, my father writes to Mrs Beach:—"I have had great domestic troubles since I wrote to you last. The housemaid has rebelled. She has seven sweethearts, and says she will go out. I have, I think, conquered her."

* Afterwards Lord President.

My father gives an amusing account of his early attempts at housekeeping in Edinburgh. "Mithoffer," he says, "continues to behave extremely well. As he is not a very good judge of meat, I have been forced to go to market myself two or three times, but now the courier is very much improved. We all tried to make a pie by our joint efforts,—the cook, Mithoffer, and I; the crust was as hard as biscuit, and we could not eat it. There is always some beef in the salting tub; and I look into the family affairs like a fat old lady of forty. The cook has 6d. per day, and the other girl her board only. I have been in a terrible quandary about lodgings. The woman of the house where I live was extremely civil all the summer, when lodgings are of no value; but at the approach of winter, when the town was so full that no lodgings were to be got, because I would not give her twelve guineas a month instead of nine, she called me a Levite, a scourge of human nature, and an extortioner, and gave me notice to go out instantly, bag and baggage, without beat of drum or colours flying. I refused to stir; and after a very severe battle, in which I threatened to carry it through all the courts of law in England, and from thence to Russia, she began to make the amiable, and to confess that she was apt to be a little warm; that she had the most perfect confidence in my generosity, and the old story. I made her sign an agreement, with subscription of two witnesses; and I am now lord of the castle for the time I tell you."

Speaking of his occupations with his pupil, he says:—"Michael finishes his Latin studies at the end of the month, and I mean to exercise him for some time in English composition, a pursuit in which we shall have perhaps more success, from his conviction of its importance. The evenings we have hitherto employed in English history, and shall continue to do so for some time. Michael takes a lesson in dancing every day. I get him now and then to show me a step or two. I cannot bear the repetition of this spectacle every day, as it never fails to throw me into a fit of laughing little short of suffocation."

As early as January, 1798, alluding to the excesses of the French, and the measures taken by them to injure our commerce, he expresses, in language then new, but since, from its truth, become almost trite, his opinion of the futility of such attempts.

"Mercantile men are naturally timid, and will, I dare say, be a good deal alarmed at these last measures taken against our commerce; at the same time, I am persuaded there is no cause of real alarm in them. We are the only manufacturers in Europe; if men have money, they will purchase the commodities of life. Custom-houses as strong as arsenals, squadrons of excisemen, battalions of supervisors, can never prevent ingenuity from supplying necessity.

They may stop up every regular and legitimate approach: desolate bays and retired nooks will pour into France and Europe our pins and pots and pans, and everything that this shop-keeping nation makes and sells; and all their efforts will only throw that business into the hands of outlaws and smugglers, which the merchant would have carried on with profit to the national revenue."

In October of the same year he writes thus:—"Everybody looks happy here on account of Jervis's victory. I can compare the joy now visible in the public countenance to nothing so much as the face of an audience just as the discourse is over, and they are coming out of church; a spectacle truly delightful to those who are fond of seeing a great number of people happy at once. We were alarmed yesterday with the report of a French fleet coming up the Firth. I dreamt about it in the night; thought I took a solemn oath to conquer or die; that I ran away; that I made a speech, about the necessity of fighting, to the soldiers; that I was found in a ditch after the battle, and pelted by Michael and some French drummers, &c. &c."

The German courier having apparently made a petition to Mr Beach, that he might be allowed tea, then rather an expensive article in household economy, my father writes to him:—"The courier shall quaff fragrant bohea at 6s. per pound. May I beg to present you with the following most beautiful impromptu on the subject, by me?—

> 'His ancient privilege restored by thee,
> The joyous courier quaffs the gratis tea,
> Uplifts the mantling cup, and curses me,
> The unfeeling spoiler of his sweet bohea.'"

Speaking of the talents and studies of his pupil, my father says:—"I continue to think much higher of Michael's abilities than I did at first acquaintance. Talents are not to be measured by our progress in studies which we engage in contrary to, but by those which we undertake with, our inclination. For the three months we gave up to Latin, our advance was certainly not very rapid; but I am taking some lessons on the pianoforte, merely to pick out a few Scotch songs; and the superior ability with which Michael has taught himself the notes and made out the tunes is very remarkable. I am forced to consider myself an extremely stupid fellow in comparison.

In considering the character and moral disposition of his pupil, the following observations appear to me of value:—

"Michael is perfectly free from any vice; but the purity of moral habits is, I am afraid, of very little use to a man unless it is accompanied with that degree of firmness which enables him to act up to what he may think right, in spite of solicitation to the contrary. Very few young men have the power of negation in any great degree

at first. It increases with the increase of confidence, and with the experience of those inconveniences which result from the absence of this virtue. Every young man must be exposed to temptation: he cannot learn the ways of men without being witness to their vices. If you attempt to preserve him from danger by keeping him out of the way of it, you render him quite unfit for any style of life in which he may be placed. The great point is, not to turn him out too soon, and to give him a pilot at first."

It is curious to read in the present days the following views of our future relations with the French nation. In 1798 my father says:—"I now consider the war between France and England no longer as an occasional quarrel or temporary dispute, but as an antipathy and national horror, after the same kind as subsists between the kite and the crow, or the churchwarden and the pauper, the weasel and the rat, the parson and the Deist, the bailiff and the half-pay captain, &c. &c., who have persecuted each other from the beginning of time, and will peck, swear, fly, preach at, and lie in wait for each other till the end of time."

And again, in the same year, he writes:—

"*November*, 1798.

"Dear Sir,—I congratulate you most seriously upon our change of situation for the better. Ireland safe; and Buonaparte embayed in Egypt; that is, surrounded by Beys. That we should sit under our vines and fig-trees in safety I do not expect, for the very excellent reason that we have none to sit under; but that we shall sit round our beef and pudding in security again, I think there is a very fair reason to expect. This place grows upon us both; we are extremely comfortably situated, and have thoughts of never coming back. To give you some idea of the Highlands, Baron Norton, at his seat there, is sixty miles from a market, and twenty miles from a post town."

In one of his letters, alluding to the indifference to religion at that time existing in England, and the great contrast in this respect which Scotland afforded, he says:—"The best way of giving you an idea of the Scotch, is to show you in what they principally differ from the English. In the first place (to begin with their physical peculiarities) they are larger in body than the English; and the women, in my opinion (I say it to my shame), handsomer than English women: their dialect is very agreeable. The Scotch certainly do not understand cleanliness; they are poorer than the English; they are a cautious and a discreet people; they are very much in earnest in their religion, though less so than they were. In England I maintain (except amongst ladies in the middle class

of life) there is no religion at all. The clergy of England have no more influence over the people at large than the cheesemongers of England. In Scotland the clergy are extremely active in the discharge of their functions, and are, from the hold they have on the minds of the people, a very important body of men. The common people are extremely conversant with the Scriptures; are really not so much pupils as formidable critics to their preachers; many of them are well read in controversial divinity. They are perhaps in some points of view the most remarkable nation in the world; and no country can afford an example of so much order, morality, economy, and knowledge amongst the lower classes of society. Every nation has its peculiarity. The very improved state of the common people appears to me at present to be the phenomenon of this country; and I intend to give it a good deal of my attention."

Writing to Mrs Beach on the subject of diet for the poor, a subject which always interested him, he says:—"There is in Edinburgh a workhouse where those poor who want support are sent, and which is supported by a voluntary assessment of all the inhabitants. At the church doors there is a collection made every Sunday, which is distributed at the discretion of the minister and elders; and this is all the public support that the poor receive. The antipathy to the workhouse is very great, and the collections not considerable; and there must be, as I fear there certainly is, a great deal of misery here. In one respect the police of Scotland is very bad. I suppose there are at least three beggars in this country for every one in England, and there is not here the same just reason for putting an end to it. They beg in a very quiet, gentle way, and thus lose the most productive art of their profession, *importunity*. Have you ever made any effort to introduce a better system of cooking amongst the poor? it would be a great charity. The basis of the food of the English poor is fine wheaten bread; and it is utterly impossible that a man, his wife, and four children can have three meals a day of dry bread upon fivepence or sixpence, which they can of broth on even less. If their manner of appropriating their money was better than it is and more provident, their pay would certainly be sufficient. I am in hopes to carry this idea into execution at some future time, and become master cook as well as master parson of my village. The people here understand this much better than in England."

Though truly loving them, his quick sense of the ludicrous made him derive great amusement from the little foibles and peculiarities of the Scotch: and often has he made them laugh by his descriptions of things which struck his English eye. "It requires," he used to say, "a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding. Their only idea of wit, or rather that inferior

variety of this electric talent which prevails occasionally in the North, and which, under the name of WUT, is so infinitely distressing to people of good taste, is laughing immoderately at stated intervals. They are so imbued with metaphysics that they even make love metaphysically. I overheard a young lady of my acquaintance, at a dance in Edinburgh, exclaim, in a sudden pause of the music, 'What you say, my Lord, is very true of love in the *aibstract*, but'—here the fiddlers began fiddling furiously, and the rest was lost. No nation has so large a stock of benevolence of heart: if you meet with an accident, half Edinburgh immediately flocks to your door to inquire after your *pure* hand or your *pure* foot, and with a degree of interest that convinces you their whole hearts are in the inquiry. You find they usually arrange their dishes at dinner by the points of the compass; 'Sandy put the gigot of mutton to the south, and move the singet sheep's head a wee bit to the nor-wast.' If you knock at the door, you hear a shrill female voice from the fifth flat shriek out, 'Wha's chapping at the door?' which is presently opened by a lassie with short petticoats, bare legs, and thick ankles. My Scotch servants bargained they were not to have salmon more than three times a week, and always pulled off their stockings, in spite of my repeated objurgations, the moment my back was turned." "Their temper stands anything but an attack on their climate. They would have you even believe they can ripen fruit; and, to be candid, I must own in remarkably warm summers I have tasted peaches that made most excellent pickles; and it is upon record that at the siege of Perth, on one occasion, the ammunition failing, their nectarines made admirable cannon balls. Even the enlightened mind of Jeffrey cannot shake off the illusion that myrtles flourish at Craig Crook. In vain I have represented to him that they are of the genus *Carduus*, and pointed out their peculiarities. In vain I have reminded him that I have seen hackney-coaches drawn by four horses in the winter, on account of the snow; that I had rescued a man blown flat against my door by the violence of the winds, and black in the face; that even the experienced Scotch fowls did not venture to cross the streets, but sidled along, tails aloft, without venturing to encounter the gale. Jeffrey sticks to his myrtle illusions, and treats my attacks with as much contempt as if I had been a wild visionary, who had never breathed his caller air, nor lived and suffered under the rigour of his climate, nor spent five years in discussing metaphysics and medicine in that garret of the earth—that knuckle-end of England—that land of Calvin, oat-cakes, and sulphur."

On returning from a little tour they had made in the Highlands in the course of the autumn, he writes:—"Michael is in good

health; we are going on well. If I can, in spite of his reluctance to study, carry him on in a course of improvement, tell him his faults, and retain his esteem, I shall succeed almost beyond my hopes, and entirely to my satisfaction. We have dined at the Duke of ——'s, and met the French King's brother there, and his suite. We were not much pleased with our day. Her Grace is a most excellent woman, but as stately a piece of ancient life as I ever saw. The duke seems to be one of that class of men who baffle all attempts to hate, like, praise, or blame them. He knows not the earth who has only seen it swelling into the moderate elevation, or sinking to the gentle descent of southern hills and valleys. He has never trod on the margin of the fearful precipice, journeyed over the silent wilderness, and gazed at the torrent hiding itself in the profound glen. He has never viewed Nature but as she is associated with human industry; and is unacquainted with large tracts of the earth from which the care of man can hope for no return; which seem never to have been quickened with the principle of vegetation, or to have participated in the bounties of Him whose Providence is over all. This we have seen in the Highlands; but we have mortified the body in gratifying the mind. We have been forced to associate oat-cakes and whisky with rocks and waterfalls, and humble in a dirty room the conceptions we indulged in a romantic glen."

My father speaks in great admiration of Dunkeld:—"Rocks, woods, and waterfalls are tumbled together in delicious horror. The order and regularity which have arranged the rest of the world never found their way here; chaos and confusion have maintained their ancient empire at Dunkeld."

And again in another part of their tour:—

"Nothing struck me more than the Cartland Crags, near Lanark. A small river has worked its passage, of ten or twelve feet in breadth, through rocks that tower 300 feet above it on each side; the passage is half a mile long. Consider what a scene this must be. Near Lanark is settled Mr David Dale; he alone employs in cotton-works 1700 souls. He is a very religious and benevolent man, and is remarkably attentive to the morals, as well as the comfort and happiness, of the manufacturing children. They are admirably instructed and brought up, with an attention to cleanliness that is truly delightful. He very often gives them a dance. The evening we were there, after the hours of work there was a general country dance of above two hundred couples. We knew nothing of it till the following morning, or of course should not have missed so pleasing a spectacle. I love to see the beauties of Nature; but I love better to see the hand of active piety stretch forth to such young orphans as these the innocent pleasures of life, the benefit of

instruction, and the blessings of religion. It is dreadful to observe, in Manchester and Birmingham, how manufacturers brutalise mankind,— how small the interval is between a *weaver and a beast.** What does his country not owe to a man who has promoted industry without propagating vice, who has enlarged the boundaries of commerce, and strengthened the ties of moral obligation?"

The reigning bore at this time in Edinburgh was ——: his favourite subject, the North Pole. It mattered not how far south you began, you found yourself transported to the north pole before you could take breath; no one escaped him. My father declared he should invent a slip-button. Jeffrey fled from him as from the plague, when possible; but one day his arch-tormentor met him in a narrow lane, and began instantly on the north pole. Jeffrey, in despair and out of all patience, darted past him, exclaiming, "D—— the north pole!" My father met him shortly after, boiling with indignation at Jeffrey's contempt of the north pole. "Oh, my dear fellow," said my father, "never mind; no one minds what Jeffrey says, you know; he is a privileged person; he respects nothing, absolutely nothing. Why, you will scarcely believe it, but it is not more than a week ago that I heard him speak disrespectfully of the Equator!"†

My father, after a more intimate knowledge of the character of his pupil, and observing the result of his efforts, writes to his parents:—"I had flattered myself that it would have been in my power to give him imperceptibly a taste for books and mental improvement. I am now convinced that whatever share of knowledge Michael may gain by reading with me, it is quite out of my power to give him a taste for books in that degree which I think useful and ornamental in his situation of life. Do not be disheartened by this opinion. Michael will be (as I have often told you) a very worthy, prudent man, with a sufficient share of sound understanding leading to conduct; an excellent heart, and manners, soft and gentlemanlike; and though literature is an excellent addition to all these, it is hardly worth the cost of them. As a clergyman and a bachelor, I cannot be supposed to know anything about falling in love; but, judging from what I have heard other people, and particularly ladies, talk about it, I really do not think there is any danger of the renewal of his passion. He has assured me that he is perfectly indifferent to her now; and, as he is remarkably sincere, I really believe him. He is so thoroughly aware, too, of the common error of young men in falling in love with the first woman

* This is so inapplicable to the present day, that it is pleasant to write it down, as a proof of the progress made in the last fifty years in the education and intelligence of this class of society.

† I see this anecdote in Mr Moore's Memoirs attributed to Leslie; but I have so often heard it told as applying to a very different person, that I think he was mistaken.

they meet, before they have had the smallest opportunity of judging of the sex and comparing different characters and dispositions, that I believe, if he were to feel the attacks of that inexpressible malady again, he would exert himself effectually to expel them."

The following is an amusing account of the state of the stage at Edinburgh, written in March 1799:—"Kemble, the player, is come down here; and these wicked people are employing Passion Week in going to tragedies and comedies. It is, I am told, extremely ludicrous to see him on the stage; half his time is employed in prompting the other actors, and correcting their motions. The other evening he was stabbed, and he was forced to put his assassin in mind that it was time to stab him; which, you will allow, is rather an awkward circumstance. You will be very much surprised that the Scotch should so totally neglect all religious worship in this week; but they do not even shut the shops on Good Friday, nor is there anything like the sound of prayer in their churches."

Speaking of the dirt of Edinburgh after a thaw, in 1799:—"Except the morning after the Flood was over, I should doubt if it had ever been dirtier."

In June of the same year he writes:—"There seems to be every appearance of an approaching battle or victory (for they are now synonymous) in the Mediterranean; candles have risen a penny a pound, from the possibility of an illumination."

In September 1799, he made a short tour in Wales with his pupil, and says:—"We have been miserably delayed by the state of Welsh post-horses, finding it difficult to get on thirty-five miles a day. From Machynlleth to Dolgelly, eighteen miles of excellent road, we were more than five hours and a half, though we gave the horses corn on the road, got out of the carriage, and pushed with all our might."

On their way through Wales they made a visit to Sir Robert Vaughan, which he amusingly describes in one of his letters:—"You will be very much pleased with his place, his efforts to improve the country round him, and his great good-nature and hospitality. I have seldom seen any man who seems to possess more natural mildness and benevolence. He sees from his windows Cader Idris and Snowdon, both of them inferior to himself in height and breadth. It was curious and amusing to see the worthy baronet surrounded by sixteen little men and women, who reached up to the waistband of his breeches, and looked like iron rails round a monument."

In the course of this autumn my father had (for the first, and I believe only time, with any of his pupils) cause of complaint against his young friend Michael; who on one occasion received his remonstrances with so much disrespect, that my father thought it his

duty, both to his pupil and himself, to make it known immediately to Mr Beach; and the result does so much honour to all parties, that I shall give it :—

"*October*, 1799.

"My dear Sir,

"I was too well convinced of the proper sentiments in which you have educated your children to doubt for a moment of the manner in which you would express yourself to Michael upon the conduct of which I had complained. Your letter produced every effect you could have wished from it. He not only apologised to me in the most ample manner, but (which convinced me he really thought himself wrong) brought in Mithoffer, before whom the affront was given, to witness the apology. Of course I said everything handsome to him on the subject, and I daresay we shall be only the better friends for what has passed. It would have been a most injurious and mistaken complaisance on my part to have sacrificed the real good of your son in order to spare the present feelings of his parents."

In a letter of 1799, alluding to passing events, he says :—"What an unaccountable thing, that Mr Pitt should have introduced the Union into the Irish Houses without being more sure of his strength! By the by, all the House are going to pair off after the recess : each Oppositionist takes his Ministerial man, and this will just make 101 duels. The Speaker fights the first clerk, for want of a regular opponent, and to avoid being idle."

"*Edinburgh, October*, 1789.

"My dear Madam,

"Thinking it necessary that Michael should become accustomed to the management of larger sums of money than hitherto, I gave him £45. At the University his income must necessarily pass through his own hands, and without much possibility of control; and as I shall have an opportunity here of observing his disposition with regard to money, I dare say you will approve of what I have done. Michael has conducted himself perfectly like a gentleman since I had the pleasure of announcing to you our reconciliation.

"He is occupied from five to six hours a day, which I think is quite as long as any young man of his age ought to be kept to his studies; or can be kept with the best effect, and without trespassing on his health and cheerfulness. We have prayers every night at eleven, before which time he understands he is expected not to go to bed; and he gets up early from choice. He is well, and I hope not more discontented with his situation than all young men, panting for pleasure and idleness, are with a state of education."

"19 *Queen Street, Edinburgh,* 1800.

"My dear Sir,

"The town is overrun with Russians, in green coats, with ugly faces and lice, which latter they never crack but when they are angry; and it is a remarkable thing that when a Russian is enraged he always combs himself, and takes his revenge upon a thousand resistless reptiles. They were very sick aboard ship, but are not allowed to land to form an encampment; only to come on shore in the daytime.

"Mithoffer has been very ill with a sore throat and inflammatory fever; he kept his bed for some days, but is recovered. I had made his epitaph and ordered his coffin.

"We are getting much more acquainted in this place, and sup out very frequently, to the infinite delight of Michael. I am almost ashamed to say we were invited out every day last week to supper; but as the business of the day is first over, this causes no interruption to our studies. In the meantime Michael gains manners, and I a headache. Farewell, my dear sir; believe me that I wish to see you and yours well and happy for many, many years to come.

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Writing to Mrs Beach in 1799, he says:—"You speak of the loss of a hothouse full of grapes as a trifling incident; there are many people who would think the loss of an only son a less grievous calamity. . . . I am indebted to Michael for an extremely just and sensible critique upon my preaching, which pleased me very much, and reproved me as much."

My father tells of his first acquaintance with Horner, who was at that time among the most conspicuous young men in "that energetic and unfragrant city." "My desire to know him proceeded first of all from being cautioned against him by some excellent and feeble people to whom I brought letters of introduction, and who represented him as a person of violent political opinions. I interpreted this to mean a person who thought for himself, who had firmness enough to take his own line in life, and who loved truth better than he loved Dundas, at that time the tyrant of Scotland. I found my interpretation just; and from then till the period of his death we lived in constant society and friendship with each other." In speaking of him after his death, in a letter to his brother, he says:—"Horner loved truth so much that he never could bear any jesting upon important subjects. I remember one evening the late Lord Dudley and myself pretended to justify the conduct of the Government in stealing the Danish fleet. We carried on the argument with some wickedness against our graver friend; he could not stand it, but bolted indignantly out of the room. We flung up

the sash, and, with a loud peal of laughter, professed ourselves decided Scandinavians. We offered him not only the ships, but all the shot, powder, cordage, and even the biscuit, if he would come back; but nothing could turn him; he went home, and it took us a fortnight of serious behaviour before we were forgiven."

I wish his pen had left us any account of the other distinguished men whose friendship he obtained in Edinburgh; but it has left only one other, and that, I believe, was written at a later period of his life.

My father had by this time so gained the confidence of his old friends, Mr and Mrs Beach, by his care of their son, that Mrs Beach requested him to select a governess for her daughters; and after some search he obtained the services of a highly cultivated lady in reduced circumstances, who had been companion to the late Lady Cooper, and had a very high reputation for her sense and character. In alluding to the regard due to the feelings of a person in her situation, my father pays so pretty a compliment to the delicacy of mind he had ever seen evinced by his friends the Beaches, that I shall give the passage :—"Upon the fair share of respect and attention with which a person who has still all the feelings, and had once the situation, of a woman of independent fortune will expect to be treated, I shall say nothing, for I never saw a family in which they were more delicately attended to than in yours; and with my representations on this subject I am sure Miss W—— is satisfied. On her part you will find nothing irritable; nothing of a disposition too sensitive for her situation; but that fair, honest pride which every individual should cherish, as the best protection of everything good and honourable in our nature."

In the following letter he speaks of his approaching marriage, and of the poverty in which he had passed his youth :—

Edinburgh, March 21, 1800.

"My dear Madam,

"I looked into Michael's accounts, which I make him pay himself. A number of little nothings go to make up the sum. Whether to call such an account expensive or not, I do not know, because I am no judge of what the lawful extravagance of a man of his condition is. I have therefore said not a syllable upon the subject, and will leave that department to you and Mr B. I got in debt by buying books. I never borrowed a farthing of anybody, and never received much; and have lived in poverty and economy all my life. My habits therefore may tinge my opinions, and I mistrust myself.

"I should wish, if it suits the convenience of Mr B., to be in

England by the end of May, as a longer delay than that might possibly retard my marriage for a year. I have some awkward business to settle, which will absolutely demand my presence about that time. Such a cause as this will, I am sure, appear to you and Mr B. quite a sufficient reason for not protracting my stay beyond that period.

"Alas, madam, there will not be a flower in Scotland for eight weeks to come! I gathered a few flowers in my way here, but the greater part of those I saw were what I had seen perpetually about Williamstrip. I was pleased beyond measure at Mr T——'s servant turning out so badly. I hope the gentleman at the keyhole will be more attended to another time. The method of soldering glass is a secret. Michael's unpunctuality is indeed very deep-seated, and, I am afraid, beyond my power to eradicate; but I know no human being some part of whose character must not be for ever connived at. If you are acquainted with any exception to this rule, you are more fortunate in your acquaintance than I ever have been or ever expect to be. Even you, good madam, require forgiveness on some points; and I myself, though I approach nearer perhaps to absolute perfection than anybody I know, am believed by the most accurate judges to fall a little short of it.

"I have been giving Michael lessons in dancing, and I am sure he is very much improved by them, though I am afraid he will forget them.

"This is a great day in Edinburgh, for it is that on which the Queen's birthday is celebrated; and everybody dances to show their loyalty, except me; and I show it by preaching, and have the pleasure of seeing my audience nod approbation as they sleep.

"I remain, with the greatest respect, yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

"*Edinburgh*, 1800.

"My dear Madam,

"I have been so strongly pressed to preach a sermon for the Swiss Cantons, on the 10th of May,—a day on which the town will be extremely full, and by people to whom Michael and myself are under such great obligations in this place,—that I can hardly refuse; and in this case we cannot get to town before the end of May. I thank you, very sincerely, my dear madam, for your good wishes. I never received any for the verification of which I so sincerely prayed. But before I can flatter myself that I shall be as happy as you and Mr Beach have been, I must take care to deserve to be as happy.* Yours, "SYDNEY SMITH."

* Alluding to his approaching marriage.

During a visit to Cheam (Mrs Pybus's country-house), previous to his marriage, he writes thus to Mr Beach, giving a general account of his stewardship :—

"*Cheam, Surrey*, 1800.

"My dear Sir,

"As I have not much to do to-day, and as I always find it more easy to write than to talk on important subjects, I shall state to you in this manner my opinion of your son ; a duty which I owe to you, to him, and myself, and which I have not discharged since my return. He is, in the most essential points of character, an extremely good young man, true, honest, honourable, and friendly, without the smallest tendency to any one vice whatsoever. In little points of disposition he never affronts, but has not that desire to oblige and to please which is so conspicuous in his brother. He has lost enough of his sulkiness to make me hope he will lose the rest ; but, upon the whole, he is a good-tempered lad, and has gained upon my affection in our twelve months' intercourse. I like him, and would serve him where I could, with great pleasure. Of his abilities I think much more highly than I did ; but his memory is bad. I cannot inspire him with a taste for knowledge and for books. He goes through the tasks I assign him with ready submission, and without interest ; and what he learns under me he will learn by regular and moderate study, steadily and carefully followed up. You know how boys are neglected at great schools ; and we have, in consequence, been employed in the plain and fundamental parts of literature. I should except the mathematics, for which he has certainly a considerable taste, and in which his progress for the time has given me great pleasure. Time, my dear sir, is what we want. You love your children and their society ; but I hope, when his health is perfectly re-established, you will turn us adrift to our studies. You will excuse me for offering my advice ; it by no means precludes you from acting as you please in every instance. Upon the whole, I think you have reason to be perfectly well satisfied with Michael. I have no doubt he will turn into an affectionate child, an agreeable gentleman, and a good man.

"I have all the documents and receipts of our expenses in my possession, ready for your inspection. If you wish for more information, and if you think I have overdrawn your account, you have the means of indemnification in your own hands, of which I most fully authorise you to make use. I do not write upon this subject from the smallest doubt of your liberality, but from the fullest conviction of it ; and because I think that the less protected a man is by the liberality of his disposition, the more he ought to be by the caution of those in whom he confides. I have no suspicion that

you believe I have put you to too great an expense; and, if I hear nothing further upon the subject, shall consider myself as fully entitled to conclude you do not. . . . I believe when you thought anything wrong you would *tell* it to me, rather than *hint* it to me. I remain, with many thanks for your kindness to me, yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Mr Beach's eldest son, Michael, having now gone to the University, it was arranged that his second son, William, should be placed under my father's care, in his place. In making arrangements for this, he writes to Mr Beach:—

"I am going, my dear Sir, with your younger son to Edinburgh. I must look to England for advancing myself in my profession. I am very willing to postpone the execution of these plans; my time and attentions are perfectly at your service. I wish to derive no sort of emolument from them; but I confess I should feel very reluctant to break in on the principal of my own small fortune, to defray the expenses of that style of society I shall enter into on your account. If, therefore, I find that the allowance we talked of, with the addition of my own income, will not cover my expenses, I am sure you will look upon the overplus as your expense, not mine. I think it is very likely there will be no such overplus. I have no sort of turn to expense, nor has Mrs Smith; for I look upon her to be full as great an economist as myself. The expenses I chiefly fear are house-rent, and the disadvantages always incurred by a visitant in distinction to a settler. I have not the least wish for public places, and a very small society will content me; and that these are my inclinations and propensities I believe you know as well as I do. After all, if you should think these observations unreasonable, I promise to be perfectly satisfied with your decision on the subject. Yours, "SYDNEY SMITH."

My father thus writes to announce his marriage:—

"*June* 26, 1800.

"My dear Sir,

"Will you have the goodness to forward this letter to my father, which is to announce to him the day of my marriage, Wednesday next, God willing; on which day drink my health, and wish as well to me and my wife, as I do to you and yours; and write to me at Robert Smith's, Esq., Beauchamp, Tiverton, Devonshire. And believe me sincerely yours, "SYDNEY SMITH."

Thus we find that after two years' residence in Edinburgh he had returned to England, to marry Miss Pybus, to whom he had long

been engaged, and whom he had known from a very early period of his life, as she had been the intimate friend and schoolfellow of his only sister, Maria. This marriage took place with the entire consent of Mrs Pybus; but with so vehement an opposition on the part of her brother, Mr Charles Pybus (who was a strong politician, and one of the Lords of the Admiralty under Mr Pitt), that it produced a complete breach between them; and deprived my father and mother of the assistance he might have afforded them on their entrance into life.

Thus detached from the only relation capable of affording her any aid, it was lucky that my mother had some fortune; for my father's only contribution towards their future *ménage* (save his own talents and character) were six small silver teaspoons, which, from much wear, had become the ghosts of their former selves. One day, in the madness of his joy, he came running into the room, and flung them into her lap, saying, "There, Kate, you lucky girl, I give you all my fortune!"

Upon this small fortune (which my father's first step was to secure in the strictest manner to his wife and children, though Mrs Pybus, who had perfect confidence in him, had thought it would have been much better to leave a portion of it unsettled in case of need), and the six silver spoons, they determined to return to Edinburgh and set up housekeeping.

"One of our early difficulties," said my mother, "was how we should buy the necessary plate and linen for our new household; but my dear mother Mrs Pybus's liberality had furnished me with the means, by bestowing on me, when I entered the world, my sister Lady Fletcher's necklace, consisting of a double row of pearls, which were said to be the finest, except Mrs Hastings', that had yet been brought to this country. I took them to ——, and sold them for £500; and all we most wanted was thus obtained. Several years after, when visiting the shop with Miss Fox and Miss Vernon, I saw in one of the glass cases my own necklace, every pearl of which I knew, and had often strung. I had the curiosity to ask the price; 'Fifteen hundred pounds,' was the answer.

My father, though, by his residence in Edinburgh with his pupil, thrown out of any immediate employment in the profession he had selected, yet took every opportunity of exercising himself in its duties, and frequently preached for his friend, Bishop Sandford, at the Episcopal Chapel. A few of these sermons, alluding more particularly to the moral effects the fearful political events of the times were producing on the public mind, he published (in 1800), with a short preface, concluding in the following words:—

"As long as God gives me strength, I will never cease to attack, in the way of my profession, and to the best of my abilities, any

system of principles injurious to the public happiness, whether they be sanctioned by the voice of the many, or whether they be not; and may the same God take that unworthy life away whenever I shrink from the contempt and misrepresentations to which my duty shall call me to submit."*

Mr Beach presented my father, soon after his marriage, with £750, for his care of Michael; which sum he put into the funds; and in this consisted his whole worldly wealth. And here I must introduce a little trait, which, though trifling in itself, yet, considering his circumstances, deserves to be mentioned.

My father had made the acquaintance, during his residence in Edinburgh, of a family consisting of a lady (one of the most beautiful specimens of old age I have ever met) and four daughters, who seemed to live for no other object than this mother. He accidentally discovered that this interesting old lady was suddenly involved in pecuniary difficulties. Regretting how little he had to offer, he entreated she would not refuse the loan of a hundred pounds out of his little store. It was accepted with the same kind feelings with which it was offered. I never heard the circumstance till after his death; and I only mention it now because she who received it is no more, and those few who survive would, I know, gladly contribute anything that would do honour to the memory of their old friend, Sydney Smith. What added to the generosity of this little offering on his part was, that he was then about to become a father, and had but little prospect of increasing his means.

Another instance of his generosity at that time was in behalf of Mr Leyden, who, born a poor shepherd boy in Teviotdale, had become so remarkable by his learning, that an effort was made by subscription to enable him to attend the College classes in Edinburgh, where he made the most astonishing progress in almost every branch of knowledge taught there. Having obtained, through Mr Dundas, an appointment to India, his poverty was such that he was quite unable to accomplish his outfit. Sir Walter Scott and my father, and a few others, were chiefly instrumental in effecting it, the latter contributing £40 out of his very small means. Mr Leyden afterwards died in India.

Of his new pupil William, my father writes in the following gratifying terms to his mother, Mrs Beach.

"*Edinburgh, November* 5, 1800.

"My dear Madam,

"Since I wrote last, William has made several acquaintance with respectable and gentlemanly young men, which I approve of

* These misrepresentations, though now forgotten, were at that time very numerous and very painful to my father.

entirely, and which will afford him amusement and society. He is fatter, handsomer, and stouter than he was. Nothing can exceed the propriety, politeness, and good humour of his general behaviour to everybody in this house; and I can assure you he is a very great —and justly a very great—favourite with us all. . . . We read together every night two hours, or longer, as it may happen, and talk over what has been done in the day. He writes me an essay every week; all of which, except one, have been done in a very superior manner. He is less shy than he was. We had one flood of tears the first time I spoke to him with any degree of seriousness; but upon explaining to him the difference between advice and rebuke, and hinting to him that he was too old for this, and had outgrown it, it has been quite discontinued. Various articles of clothing necessary for his proper appearance in this place have been procured; and I have blown him up to that moderate state of coxcomality about his dress, which is popular and becoming in a young man. He takes regular exercise, defies the weather, and is as hardy as I am from his own choice, and has not had one moment of ill-health.

"These details I enter into for your satisfaction. I would really tell you the bad as well as the good, but there is no bad to tell you. Ever yours, "SYDNEY SMITH."

"*Edinburgh, November* 10, 1801.

"My dear Sir,

"I hardly know by what William could be injured. He is, without any exception, the very best and most gentlemanly young man I ever saw, and will be an ornament and comfort to his family; nothing can possibly exceed the excellence of his behaviour in every respect. I attribute your silence on the subject of Mr L——, the attorney, to the goodness of his character; because I believe you would otherwise, as far as you could do so with discretion, interest yourself for a poor, respectable clergyman, with a numerous and increasing family. You have, I dare say, heard of the event of my poor mother's death, which has been cause of great affliction to us all. May you very long be preserved from a similar calamity!

"Ever, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Shortly after, alluding to my grandmother Mrs Robert Smith's death, for whom my father had the deepest love and veneration, he writes to Mrs Beach:—"Many thanks, my dear Madam, for your friendly message. Every one must go to his grave with his heart scarred like a soldier's body,—sometimes a parent, sometimes a child, a friend, a husband, or a wife. Thus the bands of

this life are gradually loosened, and death at last is more welcome than the comfortless solitude of the world."

On receiving the news of the madness of the King in 1801, my father writes:—

"What dreadful news, the madness of the king! And if he recovers speedily, we shall hereafter be kept in a constant state of alarm. However, I have lived long enough to wait for misfortunes till they come, without anticipating them. My poor father will, I am sure, lose several ounces of flesh *per diem*. He grows heavier and lighter with every post, and rises and falls with the stocks.

"You do not say whether you have received the second volume of my lethargics, which I desired to be left at the Kirbys', in the Strand, for you. I wish I could persuade you to favour me with your criticisms; but that, I am afraid, is almost impossible. With my preface I can hardly flatter myself you can agree; I have some thoughts of pursuing the same subject in a much longer essay."

Speaking of his early domestic arrangements with his young wife, my father writes to Mr Beach, who always seems to have taken a most kind interest in his household:—

"Mrs Sydney is quite well, though a little too much harassed by the fatigue of coming into a new house. We have secured two good servants, a cook and a housemaid, and are looking out for another. We have both been very active, and are gradually emerging into peace and order. William has taken possession of his new apartments, and is, I think, better accommodated than last year: he is perfectly well, though I am afraid he finds Edinburgh just at present a little dull, a fault which diminishes every day.

"We have been unpleasantly engaged for these two or three days past in bidding adieu to some very pleasant families, who are quitting the place. All adieus are melancholy; and principally, I believe, because they put us in mind of the last of all adieus, when the apothecary, and the heir apparent, and the nurse who weeps for pay, surround the bed: when the curate, engaged to dine three miles off, mumbles hasty prayers; when the dim eye closes for ever in the midst of empty pill-boxes, gallipots, phials, and jugs of barley-water. At that time,—a very distant one, I hope, my dear Madam,—may the memory of good deeds support you!"

In the present day of rapid communication, it is curious to read a passage like the following, written in 1801:—"I am much obliged to your intelligence about the King. We are as ignorant of what happens in London as if we were in heaven. I shall be obliged to you to send me any news about him,—either true or false, I don't care which."

About this period Lord Holland, with whom my father had been slightly acquainted, wrote to ask if he could recommend any clever young Scotch medical man to accompany him to Spain, where he was going. My father had the pleasure of recommending his friend Mr Allen, whose high character and talents were so valued at Holland House, that he never after left it, but remained there even after Lord Holland's death, and died loved, honoured, and respected by the whole of Lord Holland's family.

As the time approached for the birth of his child, my father constantly expressed his wish, first, that it might be a daughter, and secondly, that she might be born with one eye, that he might never lose her. The daughter came in due time, according to his wish, but, unfortunately, with two eyes. However, in spite of this unpropitious circumstance, she was very graciously received; and the nurse, to her horror, during five minutes' absence, found he had stolen her from the nursery a few hours after she was born, to introduce her in triumph to Jeffrey and the future Edinburgh Reviewers. I find the arrival of his daughter brought with it no little domestic trouble and anxiety to my father.—He writes to Mrs Beach :—

"*Edinburgh, March*, 1802.

"My dear Madam,

"We have had a bad time of it in our nursery. Poor Mrs Sydney is almost as weak as she was ten days after her lying-in, and is compelled to give up her nursing—a great mortification to her, but a sacrifice to absolute necessity. With a set of strange servants and in a foreign land, I have been forced to be head nurse and head everything; and my variety of occupations have left me but little leisure for correspondence. Thank God, my little girl, blessed apparently with an excellent constitution, has defied all the bad effects threatened by the mother's weakness.

"William is going on, as usual, entirely to my satisfaction. He evinces a very considerable turn for mathematics; and, above all, a steady, unshaken good conduct in the midst of the liberty I have purposely indulged him in. I have always said that the greatest object in education is to accustom a young man gradually to be his own master. I was glad to understand from you that Michael's conduct has given you pleasure. He is a very honest, open-hearted young man, and of a very affectionate disposition.

"Adieu, dear Madam! I often think with great kindness of my friends at Netherhaven, and of their ancient kindness to me in the days of my misery. Adieu!

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Being now in possession of a daughter with two eyes, it became

necessary to give her a name; and nobody would believe the meditations, the consultations, and the comical discussions he held on this important point. At last he determined to invent one, and Saba was the result.

About the period in which my father was engaged in settling this important domestic point, he was likewise employed in arranging with Messrs Jeffrey, Brougham, Murray, and his other friends, the preliminaries of that periodical which, under the name of the "Edinburgh Review," has grown into such importance, has produced such useful results, and has bestowed on its chief contributors a European reputation.

He must state its origin and results:—"Towards the end of my residence in Edinburgh, Brougham, Jeffrey, and myself happened to meet in the eighth or ninth story or flat in Buccleuch Place, the then elevated residence of Mr Jeffrey. I proposed that we should set up a Review. This was acceded to with acclamation. I was appointed editor, and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number of the Review. The motto I proposed for the Review was, 'Tenui Musam meditamur avenâ'—'We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal.' But this was too near the truth to be admitted; so we took our present grave motto from Publius Syrus, of whom none of us had, I am sure, read a single line; and so began what has since turned out to be a very important and able journal. When I left Edinburgh it fell into the stronger hands of Lords Jeffrey and Brougham and reached the highest point of popularity and success."*

"To appreciate the value of the Edinburgh Review, the state of England at the period when that journal began should be had in remembrance. The Catholics were not emancipated. The Corporation and Test Acts were unrepealed. The Game-laws were horribly oppressive; steel-traps and spring-guns were set all over the country; prisoners tried for their lives could have no counsel. Lord Eldon and the Court of Chancery pressed heavily on mankind. Libel was punished by the most cruel and vindictive imprisonments. The principles of political economy were little understood.† The laws of debt and conspiracy were upon the worst

* A distinguished periodical, speaking of the Edinburgh Review, says:—"The world will long look to this as the opening of an important era in English literary history; for then, so to say, was founded an empire of criticism, wider in its objects, more vigorous in its provisions, more perfect in its administrative machinery, than any of the dynasty which had flourished in the eighteenth century. The cause of tolerance without licentiousness, and philanthropy without cant, was substantially aided by its exertions and the attention they commanded. If the good done thereby should be apportioned out, a large share would fall to the Rev. Sydney Smith."

† "In a scarcity which occurred little more than twenty years ago, every judge (except the Chancellor and Sergeant Runnington), when they charged the Grand Jury, at-

footing. The enormous wickedness of the slave-trade was tolerated. A thousand evils were in existence, which the talents of good and able men have since lessened or removed; and these efforts have been not a little assisted by the honest boldness of the Edinburgh Review."

To estimate justly my father's moral courage in projecting and contributing to such a Review, not only the personal risk to which those who expressed liberal opinions were exposed (of which nothing gives a more vivid impression than the third volume of Mr Fox's letters, just published) should be taken into consideration, but his profession, and the corrupt state of that profession at this period. As this is a subject of which I am quite incompetent to speak, I shall quote a short passage from a remarkable article on Church Parties in the Edinburgh Review which gives a very striking description of it. "The thermometer of the Church of England sank to its lowest point in the first thirty years of George III. Unbelieving Bishops, and a slothful Clergy, had succeeded in driving from the Church the faith and zeal of Methodism which Wesley had organised within her pale. The spirit was expelled, and the dregs remained. That was the age when jobbery and corruption, long supreme in the State, had triumphed over the virtue of the Church; when the money-changers not only entered the temple, but drove out the worshippers; when ecclesiastical revenues were monopolised by wealthy pluralists; when the name of curate lost its legal meaning, and, instead of denoting the incumbent of a living, came to signify the deputy of an absentee."

The Dean of St Paul's and others have spoken of the remarkable increase in vigour of style and boldness of illustration in my father's writings as he advanced in years; but I have seldom seen it noticed, except in a very clever sketch of him written by some friend soon after his death, that he had *no youth* in his writings; no period of those crude, extravagant theoretical opinions, with which the French Revolution had infected society to a degree of which we can hardly now form any estimate; though it is alluded to in almost every publication of the times.

A letter from Mr Montague to Mr Mackintosh, given in the Life of his father Sir James Mackintosh, describes this vividly. "At this time, the wild opinions which prevailed at the commencement of the French Revolution misled most of us who were not as wise as your father, and he did not wholly escape their fascinating influence. The prevalent doctrines were, that man was so benevolent as to wish only the happiness of his fellow-creatures, so intellectual as to be able readily to discover what was best, and so far above

tributed the scarcity to the combinations of the farmers. Such doctrines would not now be tolerated in the mouth of a school-boy."

the power of temptation as never to be drawn by any allurements from the paths of virtue. Gratitude was said to be a vice, marriage an improper restraint, law an imposition, and lawyers aiders of fraud. It is scarcely possible to conceive the extensive influence which these visions had on society."

"Yet in the midst of this" (continues the writer to whom I have alluded) "Sydney Smith showed, from the outset, a singular union of courage and good sense, without a tincture of the extravagance by which, in so many young men of ability, they were at that time accompanied. He did not hesitate to embrace and avow a sound principle, however obnoxious; but neither enthusiasm nor party spirit could carry him a hair's-breath beyond what his judgment approved."

He seems to have discerned, in the first blush of youth, that true liberty was never in such danger of destruction as when seized by the rude hands of her intemperate and unenlightened worshippers; and that true religion was never in such peril of being brought into ridicule and contempt, as when disfigured by the indiscreet zeal of ignorance and fanaticism. These convictions will, I think, be seen to pervade all his works, and even his correspondence;—to have been the great incentives under which he laboured to open the eyes of our rulers, under which he endeavoured to promote reforms at their legitimate source, and to ward off those horrors which the long neglect of reform had so recently produced in France. Speaking of reforms, in one of his early letters, he says:—"What I want to see the State do, is to listen in these sad times to some of its numerous enemies. Why not do something for the Catholics, and scratch them off the list? then the Dissenters, a mitigation of the Game laws, &c., anything that would show the Government to the people in some other attitude than that of taxing, punishing, and restraining." And in the same spirit he says, in one of the sermons he preached during his residence in Edinburgh:—"In the name of God, as you tremble at retributive justice; and in the name of mankind, if mankind are dear to you; seek not that easy and accursed fame which is gathered in the work of revolutions; and deem it better to be for ever unknown, than found a momentary name upon the basis of anarchy and irreligion." My father had the more merit in maintaining this moderation on subjects which he evidently felt so strongly, as he writes to his friend Lord Jeffrey:—"I envy you your sense, your style, and the good temper with which you attack prejudices that drive me almost to the limits of insanity."

It is curious, in going through his writings, to observe that there is scarcely any one principle he has advocated, with the exception of the payment of the Catholic clergy, that has not been granted

bit by bit; and, as my father says, after many throes and struggles and hard-fought battles, that justice has been reluctantly conceded in the midst of fear and degradation, often when it was too late; which, had it been yielded in times of peace and strength, would have prevented many of the miseries the last forty years have witnessed in Ireland, and the many turmoils that have at various times agitated this country, and placed it on the verge of revolution. "In this way peace was concluded with America, and emancipation granted to the Catholics; and in this way the war of complexion will be finished in the West Indies." And again, he says:—"Most of the concessions which have been given to Ireland have been given in fear. Ireland would have been lost to this country, if the British Legislature had not, with all the rapidity and precipitation of the truest panic, passed those Acts which Ireland did not ask, but demanded, in the times of her armed association." Yet now these measures are so confirmed by the general sanction of society, that it seems almost trite and commonplace to allude to them.

I shall leave my father to paint the fate of those who ventured to maintain such opinions at the period of which I am speaking.

"From the beginning of the century (about which time the Review began), to the death of Lord Liverpool, was an awful period for those who ventured to maintain liberal opinions; and who were too honest to sell them for the ermine of the judge, or the lawn of the prelate. A long and hopeless career in your profession, the chuckling grin of noodles, the sarcastic leer of the genuine political rogue; prebendaries, deans, bishops made over your head; reverend renegades advanced to the highest dignities of the Church for helping to rivet the fetters of Catholic and Protestant Dissenters; and no more chance of a Whig administration than of a thaw in Zembla. These were the penalties exacted for liberality of opinion at that period; and not only was there no pay, but there were many stripes."

"It is always considered a piece of impertinence in England if a man of less than two or three thousand a year has any opinions at all on important subjects; and in addition he was sure to be assailed with all the Billingsgate of the French Revolution. Jacobin, leveller, atheist, Socinian, incendiary, regicide, were the gentlest appellations used; and any man who breathed a syllable against the senseless bigotry of the two Georges, or hinted at the abominable tyranny and persecution exercised against Catholic Ireland, was shunned as unfit for the relations of social life. Not a murmur against any abuse was permitted. To say a word against the suitorcide delays of the Court of Chancery,* or the cruel punish-

* He says, on this subject, in his speech on the Reform Bill:—"Look at the gigantic

ments of the Game-laws, or against any abuse which a rich man inflicted and the poor man suffered, was treason against the plousiocracy, and was bitterly and steadily resented. Lord Grey had not then taken off the bearing-rein from the English people, as Sir Francis Head has now done from horses."

My father speaks of himself as having a passionate love of common justice and common sense. He says, speaking of justice, "Truth is its handmaid, freedom is its child, peace is its companion, safety walks in its steps, victory follows in its train; it is the brightest emanation from the Gospel, it is the greatest attribute of God. It is that centre round which human motives and passions turn; and justice, sitting on high, sees genius, and power, and wealth, and birth revolving round her throne, and teaches their paths, and marks out their orbits, and warns with a loud voice, and rules with a strong hand, and carries order and discipline into a world which but for her would be a wild waste of passions."

Entering life then with these feelings, we shall, I think, best find their fruits by following the efforts of his pen through the greater part of his life in the Edinburgh Review. I have been told that I ought to give some analysis of them here. But they are now before the public in such various forms, are so well known, and, after various trials, I find them so much injured by any attempt to condense them, that I shall make his friend, Lord Monteagle, speak for me; as he states in a few lines what it would have cost me many pages to tell. I shall therefore content myself with shortly enumerating what were the subjects that occupied my father's thoughts and employed his pen during so large a portion of his life; a pen which, I think I may venture to assert, was never sullied by private passion or private interest, never degraded by an impure or unworthy motive; and which, with all its unexampled powers of sarcasm, never wounded but for the public good.

Lord Monteagle says:—"Looking at all he did, and the way in which he did it, it must be an inexpressible pleasure to all who knew, valued, and loved him, to observe that there was scarcely one question in which the moral, the intellectual, social, or even physical well-being of his fellow-men were concerned, to the advancement of which he has not endeavoured to contribute."

Brougham, sworn in at twelve, and before six o'clock has a bill on the table abolishing the abuses of a court which has been the curse of England for centuries. For twenty-five long years did Lord Eldon sit in the court, surrounded with misery and sorrow, which he never held up a finger to alleviate. The widow and the orphan cried to him as vainly as the town-crier cries when he offers a small reward for a full purse. The bankrupt of the court became the lunatic of the court; estates mouldered away, and mansions fell down, but the fees came in and all was well; but in an instant the iron mace of Brougham shivered to atoms this house of fraud and of delay."

Some of his earliest efforts seem to have been directed to subjects more immediately belonging to his profession, such as the use and abuse of the pulpit for political subjects, and the very inefficient state of pulpit eloquence. He touches on clerical reforms; he endeavours to protect the curates and inferior clergy, and to restrain the increasing power of the bishops; or rather to define those powers by laws, not leaving them dependent on the caprice of individual character or prejudice, as they then were. Toleration, from every motive, private, political, and religious, he inculcates on all occasions and in every form; and as connected with and mainly depending on this, no subject more earnestly or frequently occupied his thoughts than the state of Ireland.

Education, as existing in this country in every class and in both sexes, claimed his attention. The injurious effects of Methodism and fanaticism on true religion in this country; the infinite importance of correcting vice in such a manner as should not produce hatred to virtue; the danger of religious wars, or of the total loss of our Indian possessions from the injudicious attempts at conversion by men totally unfitted for so important a work; the injuries we were inflicting on some of our finest colonies by bad governors and worse laws,—all these he describes and deprecates. He found in the cell of the lunatic chains, darkness, terror, cruelty, everything that unrestrained power and human passions could add of horror to that heaviest of God's afflictions; and he brought into public notice the mild and humane treatment of the Quakers and its beneficial effects. He examined the state of our gaols; he read the reports of good and laborious men who had dedicated much time and attention to the subject, but men whom "the fat and sleek people, the enjoyers, the mumpsimus, the well-as-we-are people of the world," had contrived to keep down and hide from the public eye. He endeavoured to convince the unsuspecting part of the world, that we were paying and nourishing in every county of England a public school for the instruction and encouragement of profligacy and vice: no order, no division, no public eye; the innocent with the guilty; youth just tottering on the threshold of sin, living with and learning from the most hardened profligates; punishments inflicted before trial at the caprice of the magistrate or governor; and many other evils, moral as well as physical, which it only wanted the public eye and public attention to correct and improve.

At a time when the greater part of the Bench, as well as the Bar, with some noble exceptions, were opposed strongly to any change in our criminal procedure, he looked with horror at the scenes he witnessed in our courts of law, and the judicial murders that he felt must often occur under such a system; and he pleaded the cause

of the poor unprotected prisoner in language so earnest and so forcible, that it may, I hope, entitle him to share with his great friends, Sir S. Romilly and Sir J. Mackintosh, the merit of having aided in that work of mercy for which they fought so long and so ably, and for which the prisoner yet unborn may live to bless their names.

Though living in the midst of large landed proprietors, all zealous in the preservation of their game, the cruelty, injustice, and increasing severity of the Game-laws, and their oppressive and demoralising effects on the poor, frequently occupied his attention and excited his most earnest opposition.* The perplexing, but, as he says, most trite of subjects, the Poor-laws, occupied his thoughts; though, I fear, with as little result as has generally been produced by all the thought that has been expended on this most difficult question.

"Thinking (as he says) the United States the most magnificent picture of human happiness," and feeling the importance of the great political experiments that were going on there, he endeavoured to bring forward and attract public attention both to their merits and defects; urging America not to abuse the advantages she possessed; inciting Europe to profit by the example she set; and concluding by warning her, in a well-known passage, against a taste for military glory.

These, I think, were amongst the most important subjects he treated of; but there were many others of a lighter character, which he handled always with the same objects in view—to promote truth and expose evil. He leads us amusingly through the wanderings of Waterton; he unmasks the mischievous sophistry of Madame de Staël's "Delphine;" he shows the comparatively innocuous effects which the plain, unvarnished exposure of vice in "Anastasius" was calculated to produce; he points out the truth of the social picture given in "Granby;" he acts as middle-man to Bentham; he brings out to public notice, from the mass of blue-books under which they were buried, all the cruelties to which the poor climbing-boys were exposed in sweeping chimneys; he points out the utility of the Hamiltonian system in diminishing the long and valuable period of time sacrificed in our places of education to acquiring a knowledge of the learned languages. There are some few others which he has not republished, thinking them no longer of any general interest.

I am anxious, in this sketch, not to be thought to attribute an undue share of influence to my father's efforts for the public good. It is often difficult to say who gave the death-blow to an abuse; and my father's blows, all will admit, were no light ones where they fell. Yet he was but one of the many wise men who have used

* In the course of the preceding year no fewer than 12,000 persons were committed for offences against the Game-laws.

their talents for the benefit of their fellow-creatures; and many have devoted more time and attention to these objects than he, from his position, was enabled to do. But I think he has one peculiarity above almost any writer of his day,—that of *attracting public attention.* He was born for a *teacher* of the people; and, as Lord Ashburton says in his striking address to schoolmasters, "I wish to familiarise to the youngest amongst you this important truth, that no knowledge, however profound, can constitute a teacher. A teacher must have knowledge, as an orator must have knowledge, as a builder must have materials; but as, in choosing the builder of my house, I do not select the man who has the most materials in his yard, but I proceed to select him by reference to his skill, ingenuity, and taste; so also, in testing an orator or a teacher, I satisfy myself that they fulfil the comparatively easy condition of possessing sufficient materials of knowledge with which to work; I look then to those high and noble qualities which are the characteristics of their peculiar calling. There were hundreds at Athens who knew more than Demosthenes, many more that knew more at Rome than Cicero, but there was but one Demosthenes and one Cicero." So I think, though there are hundreds who have known more, laboured more, thought more, in England, yet in our day there was but one Sydney Smith.

He was a sort of rough-rider of a subject; sometimes originating, but more frequently taking up what others had for years been stating humbly, or timidly, or obscurely, or lengthily, or imperfectly, or dully, to the world; extracting at once its essence, unveiling the motives of his opponents, and placing his case clearly, concisely, simply, eloquently, boldly, brightly, before the public eye. Thus the subject became read, thought of, discussed, and often acted upon by thousands of persons, dispersed over various parts of the world. This cannot have been without powerful influence on the opinions and conduct of society.

The peculiar talent possessed by my father is well described in a sketch by a personal friend of considerable talent, printed at the time of his death.

"In fact, he had read much, and always with the sincerest desire to arrive at truth; and if he lacked that quality of intellect which is capable of imparting original views on profound subjects, no man was ever more successful in possessing himself of the results of other men's thoughts, and in diffusing them in a form suited to the apprehension of ordinary readers. A distinguished scholar now living, writing of Sydney Smith to a friend in 1840, observes:—'Ridicule seems to me to be admirably fitted to confound fools and to destroy their prejudices. It is not needed in order to recommend truth to wise men, and indeed, from its

generally dealing in exaggeration and slight misrepresentation, is likely to offend them. It is his mastery of ridicule which renders Sydney Smith so powerful as a diffuser of ideas, for in order to diffuse widely it is necessary to be able to address *fools*. His powers as a *diffuser*, as compared with the powers of a great *inventor*, who was latterly altogether wanting in the diffusing power, are well shown in his article on Bentham's "Book of Fallacies;" indeed, as a diffuser of the good ideas of other men, I do not know whether he ever had an equal.'

"When the imaginative faculty was in question, however, Sydney Smith was creative and original enough, God knows. When in good spirits, the exuberance of his fancy showed itself in the most fantastic images and most ingenious absurdities, till his hearers and himself were at times fatigued with the merriment they excited. He had the art, too, of divesting personalities of vulgarity, and not unfrequently was the object of his wit seen to enjoy the exercise of it quite as much as others; in fact, many persons rather felt it as a compliment when Sydney singled them out for sport."

In another sketch of my father's writings I have met with this passage, which I think so just that I shall insert it.

"Few men could write with his disregard of common forms, and his perfect expression of individual peculiarities, without falling into coarseness or buffoonery. The writings of Sydney are free from all vulgarities usual to the familiar writer. The great peculiarity of his works is their singular blending of the beautiful with the ludicrous, and this is the source of his refinement. He is keen and personal, almost fierce and merciless, in his attacks on public abuses; he has no check on his humour from authority or conventional forms, and yet he very rarely violates good taste; there is much good-humour in him in spite of his severity: it would be difficult to point out the source of this power of fascination, but it strikes us as being different from anything else we have ever seen."

CHAPTER III.

Extracts from Lectures—Preface to Sermons—Analysis of Sermons—Sermon for the Blind—Returns to Edinburgh—Takes Pupils—Illness of Daughter—Moral Courage—Studies Medicine and Moral Philosophy.

I HAVE endeavoured in the last chapter (with as little commentary as possible) to give a short sketch of the most important subjects that occupied my father's thoughts, and employed his pen, during twenty-eight years of his life, in the Edinburgh Review.

But to perform my task properly, I ought perhaps to add some account of the subject-matter of his lectures and sermons. The analysis of the former, if made at all, must be done by an abler pen than mine. I shall therefore content myself with two extracts only. The first has often been quoted, not only for its beauty, but as affording a specimen of the high moral tone which pervades these lectures. The second was extracted by one of his earliest college associates (and, I believe, now oldest friend alive), Mr Duncan; and sent to my mother, as giving what he thought the best description of my father that has ever been written. The first is from the Lecture "On the Conduct of the Understanding;" the second is from that on "Wit and Humour."

"Therefore, when I say, in conducting the understanding, love knowledge with a great love, with a vehement love, with a love coeval with life, what do I say but love innocence, love virtue, love purity of conduct, love that which, if you are rich and powerful, will sanctify the blind fortune which has made you so, and make men call it justice? Love that which, if you are poor, will render your poverty respectable, and make the proudest feel it unjust to laugh at the meanness of your fortunes. Love that which will comfort and adorn you, and never quit you, which will open to you the kingdom of thought, and all the boundless regions of conception, as an asylum against the cruelty, the injustice, and the pain that may be your lot in this outward world; that which will make your motives habitually great and honourable, and light up in an instant a thousand noble disdains at the very thought of meanness and of fraud.

"Therefore, if any young man has embarked his life in the pursuit of knowledge, let him go on without doubting or fearing the event;

let him not be intimidated by the cheerless beginnings of knowledge, by the darkness from which she springs, by the difficulties which hover around her, by the wretched habitation in which she dwells, by the want and sorrow which sometimes journey in her train. But let him ever follow her as an angel that guards him, and as the genius of his life. She will bring him out at last into the light of day, and exhibit him to the world, comprehensive in acquirements, fertile in resources, rich in imagination, strong in reasoning, prudent and powerful above his fellows in all the relations and in all the offices of life."

"The meaning of an extraordinary man is, that he is eight men, not one man; that he has as much wit as if he had no sense, and as much sense as if he had no wit; that his conduct is as judicious as if he were the dullest of human beings, and his imagination as brilliant as if he were irretrievably ruined. But when wit is combined with sense and information; when it is softened by benevolence and restrained by principle; when it is in the hands of a man who can use it and despise it; who can be witty and something more than witty; who loves humour, justice, decency, good nature, morality, and religion ten thousand times better than wit, wit is then a beautiful and delightful part of our nature.

"Genuine and innocent wit like this is surely the flavour of the mind. Man could direct his ways by plain reason, and support his life by tasteless food; but God has given us wit, and flavour, and brightness, and laughter, and perfumes, to enliven the days of man's pilgrimage, and to charm his pained steps over the burning marle."

The character and design of his Sermons will perhaps be best explained by a short preface he published as early as the year 1801, but never reprinted; explaining his reasons for the course he has taken; then showing what that course has been, and giving a few extracts from his sermons.

"He who publishes sermons should explain whether he publishes speeches, or essays, or what it is he does publish; for metaphysical dissertations, theological polemics, Scripture criticism, historical disquisition, and moral and religious doctrine, and exhortation, are all included under the appellation of sermons. Now every work should be tried by the intentions with which it was written. A moral sermon, delivered before a mixed audience of both sexes, would be very bad, if it contained a profound analysis of human motives and actions; and such an analysis should never be attempted before a mixed audience, because a continued attention to

a difficult subject is a very rare quality, which the habits of the mass of mankind can never lead them to acquire. Before such an audience all these sermons were delivered, and whoever does me the honour of judging of them at all, will, I hope, do me the justice of judging them with a relation to this circumstance.

"The clergy have at all times complained of the decay of piety, in language similar to that which they now hold from the pulpit. The best way of bringing this declamation to proof is to look into the inside of our churches, and to remark how they are attended. In London, I dare say, there are full seven-tenths of the whole population who hardly ever enter a place of worship from one end of the year to the other. At the fashionable end of the town the congregations are almost wholly made up of ladies, and there is an appearance of listlessness, indifference, and impatience, very little congenial to our theoretical ideas of a place of worship. In the country villages half of the parishioners do not go to church at all, and almost all, with the exception of the sick and old, are in a state of wretched ignorance and indifference with regard to all religious opinions whatever.

"The clergy of a district in the diocese of Lincoln associated lately for the purpose of forming an estimate of the state of religon within their own limits. The amount of the population where the inquiry was set on foot, was 15,042. It was found that the average number of the ordinary congregations was 4933, and of communicants at each sacrament 1808; so that not one in three attended divine service, nor one in six of the adults (who amounted to 11,282) partook of the Sacrament.

"Though other grave and important causes have unquestionably contributed very largely to produce this indifference, which is by no means necessarily connected with infidelity, still, I am afraid, it must in some little degree be attributed to our form of worship, and to the clergy themselves.

"That the attention of the greater part of an audience can be be kept up, through many repetitions, in a service that lasts an hour and a half, or an hour and three quarters, is as much to be wished as it is to be little expected. Piety, stretched beyond a certain point, is the parent of impiety. By attempting to keep up the fervour of devotion for so long a time, we have thinned our churches, and driven away those fluctuating, lukewarm Christians who will always outnumber the zealous and devout, and whom it should be our first object to animate, allure, and fix.

"The English clergy, though upon the whole a very learned, pious, moral, and decent body of men, are not very remarkable for professional activity; and when they have discharged the formal and exacted duties of religion, are not very forward, by gratuitous inspec-

tion and remonstrance, to keep alive and diffuse a due sense of religion in their parishioners.

"To these causes may be added the low state of pulpit eloquence.

"Preaching has become a by-word for long and dull conversation of any kind; and whoever wishes to imply, in any piece of writing, the absence of everything agreeable and inviting, calls it a sermon.

"One reason for this is the bad choice of subjects for the pulpit. The clergy are allowed about twenty-six hours every year for the instruction of their fellow-creatures: and I cannot help thinking this short time had better be employed on practical subjects, in explaining and enforcing that conduct which the spirit of Christianity requires, and which mere worldly happiness commonly coincides to recommend. These are the topics nearest the heart, which make us more fit for this and a better world, and do all the good that sermons ever will do. Critical explanations of difficult passages of Scripture, dissertations on the doctrinal and mysterious points of religion, learned investigations of the meaning and accomplishment of prophecies, do well for publication, but are ungenial to the habits and taste of a general audience. Of the highest importance they are to those who can defend the faith and study it profoundly; but, God forbid it should be necessary to be a scholar, or a critic, in order to be a Christian. To the multitude, whether elegant or vulgar, the result only of erudition, employed for the defence of Christianity, can be of any consequence: with the erudition itself they cannot meddle, and must be fatigued if they are doomed to hear it. In every congregation there are a certain number whom principle, old age, or sickness has rendered truly devout; but in preaching, as in everything else, the greater number of instances constitute the rule, and the lesser the exception.

"A distinction is set up, with the usual inattention to the meaning of words, between moral and religious subjects of discourse; as if every moral subject must not necessarily be a Christian subject. If Christianity concern itself with our present, as well as our future happiness, how can any virtue, or the doctrine which inculcates it, be considered as foreign to our sacred religion? Has our Saviour forbidden justice,—proscribed mercy, benevolence, and good faith? or, when we state the more sublime motives for their cultivation, which we derive from revelation, why are we not to display the temporal motives also, and to give solidity to elevation by fixing piety upon interest?

"There is a bad taste in the language of sermons evinced by a constant repetition of the same scriptural phrases, which perhaps were used with great judgment two hundred years ago, but are now become so trite that they may, without any great detriment, be exchanged for others. 'Putting off the old man—and putting on the

new man,' 'The one thing needful,' 'The Lord hath set up his candlestick,' 'The armour of righteousness,' &c. &c. &c. &c. The sacred Scriptures are surely abundant enough to afford us the same idea with some novelty of language: we can never be driven, from the penury of these writings, to wear and fritter their holy language into a perfect cant, which passes through the ear without leaving any impression.

"To this cause of the unpopularity of sermons may be added the extremely ungraceful manner in which they are delivered. The English, generally remarkable for doing very good things in a very bad manner, seem to have reserved the maturity and plenitude of their awkwardness for the pulpit. A clergyman clings to his velvet cushion with either hand, keeps his eye riveted upon his book, speaks of the ecstacies of joy and fear with a voice and a face which indicate neither, and pinions his body and soul into the same attitude of limb and thought, for fear of being called theatrical and affected. The most intrepid veteran of us all dares no more than wipe his face with his cambric sudarium; if, by mischance, his hand slip from its orthodox gripe of the velvet, he draws it back as from liquid brimstone, or the caustic iron of the law, and atones for this indecorum by fresh inflexibility and more rigorous sameness. Is it wonder, then, that every semi-delirious sectary who pours forth his animated nonsense with the genuine look and voice of passion should gesticulate away the congregation of the most profound and learned divine of the Established Church, and in two Sundays preach him bare to the very sexton? Why are we natural everywhere but in the pulpit? No man expresses warm and animated feelings anywhere else, with his mouth alone, but with his whole body; he articulates with every limb, and talks from head to foot with a thousand voices. Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions alone? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is it a rule of oratory to balance the style against the subject, and to handle the most sublime truths in the dullest language and the driest manner? Is sin to be taken from men, as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber? Or from what possible perversion of common sense are we all to look like field-preachers in Zembla, holy lumps of ice, numbed into quiescence, and stagnation, and mumbling?

"It is theatrical to use action, and it is Methodistical to use action.

"But we have cherished contempt for sectaries, and persevered in dignified tameness so long, that while we are freezing common sense for large salaries in stately churches, amidst whole acres and furlongs of empty pews, the crowd are feasting on ungrammatical fervour and illiterate animation in the crumbling hovels of

Methodists. If influence over the imagination can produce these powerful effects; if this be the chain by which the people are dragged captive at the wheel of enthusiasm, why are we, who are rocked in the cradle of ancient genius, who hold in one hand the book of the wisdom of God, and in the other grasp that eloquence which ruled the Pagan world, why are we never to rouse, to appeal, to inflame, to break through every barrier, up to the very haunts and chambers of the soul? If the vilest interest upon earth can daily call forth all the powers of the mind, are we to harangue on public order and public happiness, to picture a re-uniting world, a resurrection of souls, a rekindling of ancient affections, the dying day of heaven and of earth, and to unveil the throne of God, with a wretched apathy which we neither feel nor show in the most trifling concerns of life? This surely can be neither decency nor piety, but ignorant shame, boyish bashfulness, luxurious indolence, or anything but propriety and sense. There is, I grant, something discouraging at present to a man of sense in the sarcastical phrase of popular preacher; but I am not entirely without hope that the time may come when energy in the pulpit will be no longer considered as a mark of superficial understanding; when animation and affectation will be separated; when churches will cease (as Swift says) to be public dormitories; and sleep be no longer looked upon as the most convenient vehicle of good sense.

"I know well that out of ten thousand orators by far the greater number must be bad, or none could be good; but by becoming sensible of the mischief we have done, and are doing, we may all advance a proportional step; the worst may become what the best are, and the best better.

"There is always a want of grandeur in attributing great events to little causes; but this is in some small degree compensated for by truth. I am convinced we should do no great injury to the cause of religion if we remembered the old combination of *aræ et foci*, and kept our churches a little warmer. An experienced clergyman can pretty well estimate the number of his audience by the indications of a sensible thermometer. The same blighting wind chills piety which is fatal to vegetable life; yet our power of encountering weather varies with the object of our hardihood; we are very Scythians when pleasure is concerned, and Sybarites when the bell summons us to church.

"No reflecting man can ever wish to adulterate manly piety (the parent of all that is good in the world) with mummery and parade. But we are strange, very strange creatures, and it is better perhaps not to place too much confidence in our reason alone. If anything, there is, perhaps, too little pomp and ceremony in our worship, instead of too much. We quarrelled with the Roman Catholic

Church, in a great hurry and a great passion, and furious with spleen; clothed ourselves with sackcloth, because she was habited in brocade; rushing, like children, from one extreme to another, and blind to all medium between complication and barrenness, formality and neglect. I am very glad to find we are calling in more and more the aid of music to our service. In London, where it can be commanded, good music has a prodigious effect in filling a church; organs have been put up in various churches in the country, and, as I have been informed, with the best possible effect. Of what value, it may be asked, are auditors who come there from such motives? But our first business seems to be, to bring them there from any motive which is not undignified and ridiculous, and then to keep them there from a good one: those who come for pleasure may remain for prayer.

"Pious and worthy gentlemen are ever apt to imagine that mankind are what they ought to be; to mistake the duty for the fact; to suppose that religion can never weary its votaries; that the same novelty and ornament which are necessary to enforce every temporal doctrine are wholly superfluous in religious admonition; and that the world at large consider religion as the most important of all concerns, merely because it is so; whereas, if we refer to facts, the very reverse appears to be the case. Every consideration influences the mind in a compound ratio of the importance of the effects which it involves and their proximity. A man who was sure to die a death of torture in ten years would think more of the most trifling gratification or calamity of the day than of his torn flesh and twisted nerves years hence. If we were to read the gazette of a naval victory from the pulpit we should be dazzled with the eager eyes of our audience; they would sit through an earthquake to hear us. The cry of a child, the fall of a book, the most trifling occurrence, is sufficient to dissipate religious thought, and to introduce a more willing train of ideas; a sparrow fluttering about the church is an antagonist which the most profound theologian in Europe is wholly unable to overcome. A clergyman has so little previous disposition to attention in his favour, that, without the utmost efforts, he can neither excite it or preserve it when excited. It is his business to awaken mankind by every means in his power, and to show them their true interest. If he despise energy of manner and labour of composition, from a conviction that his audience are willing, and that his subject alone will support him, he will only add lethargy to languor, and confirm the drowsiness of his hearers by becoming a great example of sleep himself.

"That many greater causes are at work to undermine religion I seriously believe; but I shall probably be laughed at when I say that warm churches, solemn music, animated preaching upon

practical subjects, and a service some little abridged, would be no contemptible seconds to the just, necessary, and innumerable invectives which have been levelled against Rousseau, Voltaire, D'Alembert, and the whole pandemonium of those martyrs to Atheism who toiled with such laborious malice, and suffered odium with such inflexible profligacy, for the wretchedness and despair of their fellow-creatures.

"I have merely expressed what appears to me to be the truth in these remarks. I hope I shall not give offence; I am sure I do not mean to do it. Some allowance should be made for the severity of censure when the provident satirist furnishes the raw material for his own art, and commits every fault which he blames."

Entering on his ministry, then, with these views, we shall, I think, find that my father's religion is tinctured, in great measure by his character—it has nothing intolerant, repulsive, or morose in his hands. He first seeks to inspire the love of God by painting the world overflowing with beauties of form, colour, sight, taste, smell, feeling; the mind of man filled with genius, fancy, wit, imagination, eloquence,—properties and feelings totally unnecessary to the mere bare cold existence that might have been the lot of man, but bestowed upon him in such variety and profusion as almost baffles the comprehension, and shows the boundless love of the Creator in placing such happiness within the reach of his creatures.

This feeling is evinced in the following passage taken from a sermon on "The Immortality of the Soul;" and will be seen to pervade not only his sermons, but his lectures, and even his reviews, wherever the subject admits of any allusion to religion.

He says, speaking of the faculties of animals:—"If man, like these, had only talents to gather his support, and defeat the hostile animals which surround him, no hope of immortality could be gathered from a condition like this; man would be of the earth, earthy; destined to live in the world with qualities fitted for this world, and to all appearance limited to it. But in speaking of the mind of man, we forget and we pass over all those faculties which are sufficient for the preservation of life. We do not wonder at man because he is cunning in procuring food, but we are amazed with the variety, the superfluity, the immensity of human talents. We are astonished that he should have found his way over the seas, and numbered the stars, and called by its name every earth, and stone, and plant, and creeping reptile that the Almighty has made. We see him gathered together in great cities, guided by laws, disciplined by instruction, softened by fine arts, and sanctified by

solemn worship. We count over the pious spirits of the world, the beautiful writers, the great statesmen, all who have invented subtlely, who have thought deeply, who have executed wisely: all these are proofs that we are destined for a second life; and it is not possible to believe that this redundant vigour, this lavish and excessive power, was given for the mere gathering of meat and drink. If the only object is present existence, such faculties are cruel, are misplaced, are useless. They all show us that there is something great awaiting us; that the soul is now young and infantine, springing up into a more perfect life when the body falls into dust."

On various occasions he dwells on the evidences of the authenticity of the Christian religion. He says:—"I have selected this train of reasoning with some care from the best writers in defence of Christianity, because it is always right that a man should be able to render a reason for the faith that is within him."

In discoursing on these evidences, he enforces them with all the powers with which he was endowed. Having shown the authenticity of the religion he teaches, he proceeds to inculcate in a variety of forms the most important duties that religion enjoined: amongst these he has dwelt on none more frequently than "the *purity and government of the heart*," which, he says, "is God's, and to God it will return;" "it is the ark of God." "Is the passport to heaven written anywhere else than in a pure heart?" He shows how in this respect the Christian differs from all spurious religions, not contenting itself with ceremonies and outward forms, but requiring thought, word, and deed.

"The beauty of the Christian religion is, that it carries the order and discipline of heaven into our very fancies and conceptions, and, by hallowing the first shadowy notions of our minds from which actions spring, makes our actions themselves good and holy."

Toleration, long-suffering, and charity, he gathers from every page of the Gospel. "The Church," he says, "must be distinguished from religion itself; we might be Christians without any Established Church at all, as some countries of the world are at this day. A church establishment is only an instrument for teaching religion, but an instrument of admirable contrivance and of vast utility. The Church of England is the wisest and most enlightened sect of Christians; I think so, or I would not belong to it another hour. But is it possible for me to believe that every Christian out of the pale of that Church will be consigned after this life to the never-ending wrath of God? If I were to preach such doctrines, who would hear me? Can I paint God as the protector of one Christian creed, dead to all prayers, blind to all woes but ours?—God, whom

the Indian Christian, whom the Armenian Christian, whom the Greek Christian, whom the Catholic, whom the Protestant, adore in a varied manner, in another climate, with a fresh priest and a changed creed. Are you and I to live again, and are these Christians as well as us not to live again? Foolish, arrogant man has said this, but God has never said this. He calls for the just in Christ. He tells us that through that name He will reward every good man, and accept every just action; that if you take up the cross of Christ He will reward you for every kind deed, repay you sevenfold for every example of charity, carefully note and everlastingly recompense the justice, the honour, the integrity, the benevolence of your present life. And yet, though God is the God of all Christians, each says to the other, He is not your God, but my God; not the God of the just in Christ, but the God of Calvin, the God of Luther, or the God of the Papal Crown."

"The true Christian, amid all the diversities of opinion, searches for the holy in desire, for the good in council, for the just in works; and he loves the good, under whatever temple, at whatever altar he may find them."

"If I have *read well my Gospel*, it is in such wise we should imitate the patient forbearance of our common Father, who pities the frailties we do not pity, who forgives the error we do not forgive, who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."

He insists strongly on the vital importance of the religious education of youth:—"When you see a child brought up in the way he should go, you see a good of which you cannot measure the quantity, nor perceive the end; it may be communicated to the children's children of that child. It may last for centuries; it may be communicated to innumerable individuals. It may be planting a plant, and sowing a seed, which may fill the land with the glorious increase of righteousness, and bring upon us the blessings of the Almighty."

He then points out the true pleasures, the use and the abuse, of youth; the preparations for age; the warnings sent by a merciful God; the utility of meditation on death; the worthlessness of this world but as a stepping-stone to a better. And thus, whilst raising the mind from earth to heaven, and urging, as he says, "nothing foolish, nothing romantic, nothing bordering on ridicule or enthusiasm," he inculcates a recollection that there are really and truly things above this world, and coming after this world, and better than this world. He exhorts us to live as others live, and do as others do, but at the same time to live to higher purposes than others live, and do greater and better actions than others do. He then enters into the detail of those virtues, and the attack on those

vices, which the wisdom of God has either commanded or forbidden for the happiness of man.

This, I believe, will be found to be an accurate analysis of the use he made of his ministry. Few extracts have been made, from the difficulty of selection; but I may venture to say that those who will seek, and select for themselves, will not be unrewarded.

As however my opinion can hardly be considered an impartial one, I may be allowed to quote two or three extracts from publications, after his death, in confirmation of it. "In a literary point of view," says one writer, "these sermons stand alone among modern pulpit discourses; they have not the theological learning which distinguishes some, or the mystical eloquence that gives character to the out-pourings of the present Bishop of Oxford; but how full of freshness and life they are! There is nothing of compilation or imitation in them; the writer has not consulted other divines for topics and ideas, but, selecting his text, he has treated it from the stores of his mind, exhibiting his own view on questions of doctrine, and illustrating matters of practice from his own observation and experience of mankind, and it bears the strong impress which vigorous life always imparts."

Another says:—"Christianity was not a dogma with Sydney Smith, it was a practical and most beneficent creed; it was the rule of action to his life. The volume contains not a thought or opinion at war with Christian charity."

And again, one says:—"But how beautiful were the serious moods of Sydney Smith! What a fine fulness and solidity they had; drawn from the strength and justice which we believe to have been the ruling sense of his mind, and tempered with the warmth of character, of which no man had a larger share. What a picture is that in one of his sermons, where he describes the village school, and the tattered scholars, and the aged, poverty-stricken master, teaching the mechanical art of reading or writing, and thinking he was teaching that alone, while in truth he was protecting life, insuring property, fencing the altar, guarding the throne, giving space and liberty to all the fine powers of man, and lifting him up to his own place in the order of creation!"

I shall content myself with but one more extract, from his Charity Sermon in behalf of the Blind, as it was the one which elicted the splendid eulogium from Mr Dugald Stewart, to which I have alluded elsewhere.

"The author of the book of Ecclesiastes has told us 'that the light is sweet, that it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun.' The sense of sight is indeed the highest bodily privilege, the purest physical pleasure, which man has derived from his Creator. To see that wandering fire, after he has finished his

journey through the nations, coming back to his eastern heavens, the mountains painted with light, the floating splendour of the sea, the earth waking from deep slumber, the day flowing down the sides of the hills till it reaches the secret valleys, the little insect recalled to life, the bird trying her wings, man going forth to his labour,—each created being moving, thinking, acting, contriving, according to the scheme and compass of its nature, by force, by cunning, by reason, by necessity. Is it possible to joy in this animated scene, and feel no pity for the sons of darkness? for the eyes that will never see light? for the poor clouded in everlasting gloom? If you ask me why they are miserable and dejected, I turn you to the plentiful valleys; to the fields now bringing forth their increase; to the freshness and the flowers of the earth; to the endless variety of its colours; to the grace, the symmetry, the shape of all it cherishes and all it bears; these you have forgotten, because you have always enjoyed them: but these are the means by which God Almighty makes man what he is—cheerful, lively, erect, full of enterprise, mutable, glancing from heaven to earth, prone to labour and to act. Why was not the earth left without form and void? Why was not darkness suffered to remain on the face of the deep? Why did God place lights in the firmament, for days, for seasons, for signs, and for years? That He might make man the happiest of created beings; that He might give to this his favourite creation a wider scope, a more permanent duration, a richer diversity of joy. This is the reason why the blind are miserable and dejected—because their soul is mutilated, and dismembered of its best sense—because they are a laughter and a ruin, and the boys of the streets mock at their stumbling feet.

"Therefore, I implore you, by the Son of David, have mercy on the blind. If there is not pity for all sorrows, turn the full and perfect man to meet the inclemency of fate; let not those who have never tasted the pleasures of existence be assailed by any of its sorrows; the eyes which are never gladdened by light should never stream with tears.

"How merciful our blessed Saviour was wont to show himself to their afflictions! Blind Bartimeus sat by the wayside begging; and as the crowd passed by, he cried with a loud voice, 'Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!' Jesus stopped the multitude, and before them all restored to him his sight. The first thing that he saw, who never saw before, was the Son of his God! These blind people, like Bartimeus, will never see, till they behold their Redeemer on the last day: not as He then was, in his earthly shape, but girded by all the host of heaven,—the Judge of nations, the everlasting Counsellor, the Prince of peace. At that

hour this heaven and earth will pass away, and all things melt with fervent heat: but in the wreck of worlds no tittle of mercy shall perish, and the deeds of the just shall be recorded in the mind of God."

In giving this little sketch of his writings, I have somewhat anticipated in my narrative, and must return to my father's residence in Edinburgh. Mr Beach had requested him to receive his second son under his charge, and at the same time Mr Gordon, of Ellon Castle, was entrusted to his care by his guardians.

For the care of each of these young men he received £400, the highest sum which had been then given to any one but Mr Dugald Stewart. He fully justified the trust reposed in him; he lived with them as a father and a friend. They are both still alive, and both, I believe, retain warm feelings of love and respect for the memory of their former Mentor; indeed one of them always evinced a truly filial affection towards him.

On one occasion he was much amused by the complaints made by his young friends of the difficulty of finding conversation for their partners in the two balls a week which he allowed them during the season. "Oh," said he, "I'll fit you up in five minutes: I'll write you some conversations, and you will be considered the two most agreeable young men in Edinburgh." Pen and ink were brought, the conversations—numbers one, two, and three—written down amidst fits of laughter. Each youth chose his conversation; and it would be difficult to say who was the most amused, the writer, the speaker, or the hearer, by this novel expedient.

During his residence in Edinburgh, though without any clerical duties of his own, my father not unfrequently preached in the Episcopal church, then served by Bishop Sandford; and I believe the earliest of the charity sermons he has preached (of which there are several very touching ones amongst those which have been published) was for the Lying-in Hospital. The singular custom which was then always observed, of delivering these sermons at night, seems to have given occasion to a striking passage in it.

A few months after the birth of his daughter, he went in the summer for a short time to Burntisland, a small sea-bathing place at no great distance from Edinburgh, for the recovery of my mother's health. From hence he writes:—

"*Sunday, July*, 1802.

"My dear Madam,

"I cannot remain a single day without thanking you for your kind letter. The interpretation you put on Mrs Smith's illness originated, I am sure, in your goodness of heart, and in that spirit of kindness with which I have always been treated by you; but I

can assure you most sincerely, it is not just. Mrs Sydney is as cheerful and as happy as it is possible for a woman to be who is suffering from great bodily weakness; and even this cause of her suffering, thank God, is considerably diminished since I wrote to you last, as she has already derived much advantage from her short residence here.

"Nothing can be more delightful than the situation in which we are placed; and you would laugh to see the various contrivances to which we have had recourse to make our cabin comfortable. Our meat-larder is a hamper, and hung to a beam; Mrs Smith's dressing-table a herring-barrel; her bell a pair of tongs tied to a rope, passed through the door. The books are kept in the corner cupboard with the yellow pickles; and all sorts of articles for the brains and the stomach, hard and soft, sweet and sour, corruptible and incorruptible, are huddled together. There is a very snug corner left for William, and he will be extremely pleased with this place.

"Little Saba is really a charming child, and I have discovered in her all the virtues you suppose me to have done.

"God bless you, dear Madam! and believe me yours ever,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Here, but for his courage and firmness, he would have lost his long-wished-for daughter, in a way he had not at all anticipated. When only six months old she fell ill of the croup, with such fearful violence, that it defied all the remedies employed by the best medical man there. The danger increased with every hour. Dr Hamilton, then one of the most eminent medical men in Edinburgh, was sent for, could not come, but said, "Persevere in giving two grains of calomel every hour; I never knew it fail." It was given for eleven hours; the child grew worse and worse; the medical man in attendance then said, "I dare give no more; I can do no more, the child must die, but at this age I would not venture to give more to my own child." "You," said my father, "can do no more; Hamilton says, Persevere; I will take the responsibility, I will give it to her myself." He gave it, and the child was saved.

In his account of this attack, to his friend Mrs Beach, my father says:—

"Mrs Smith is much better, and my little girl perfectly recovered from a severe attack of the croup. By the bye, it may be worth while to inform you that she was saved from this fatal and rapid disease by taking two grains of calomel every hour till the symptoms subsided, and then gradually lessening the doses; so that she took in twenty-four hours thirty-two grains, besides bleeding and blistering and emetics; and is not yet six months old."

Another instance of his moral courage and presence of mind occurred in after-life. He was accidentally at the house of a near relation soon after her confinement, who was suddenly seized by a most alarming attack. Her husband was from home; the very eminent medical man who attended her was absent, and all the others sent to in this moment of distress were out also. At last, a young medical man was brought, who declared the danger to be imminent; that if the patient were a pauper, he would bleed her instantly, which would probably save her life: he feared, however, to interfere in a case attended by so eminent a man; as, if he failed, he should be ruined. My father's medical knowledge confirming this opinion, he determined to take the whole responsibility upon himself, and insisted on the patient being bled before he left the house. Relief was immediate, and by the time the husband returned, the sufferer was safe.

At the end of the autumn he returned again to Edinburgh for the winter, and his time there was divided between his pupils; the Edinburgh Review, to which he was at that period not only contributor, but editor; the enjoyment of the choicest society that was to be found anywhere out of London; and the study of medicine, anatomy, and moral philosophy. He was a constant attendant on the admirable lectures of Mr Dugald Stewart, in the University of Edinburgh, with whom he lived in habits of almost daily communication; as also with that remarkable man, Dr Thomas Brown, who succeeded Mr Stewart in the Professor's chair of Moral Philosophy, and from whom he imbibed a keen love of the subjects connected with that science.

Medicine and anatomy had always been favourite pursuits of my father's, even when at Oxford. He bestowed so much attention indeed on the study of the former under Sir Christopher Pegge, that the Professor much wished him to become a physician. Feeling now that such knowledge might be of great use in his future destination, the Church, he pursued it with ardour, and attended the Clinical Lectures at the hospitals in Edinburgh, given by Dr Gregory. He thus obtained a degree of knowledge that enabled him afterwards to be of great service to the poor of his parish, who entirely depended on him for assistance; and to become the favourite doctor of his own family, who rarely summoned any other medical man to their aid. I have the authority of my husband, Sir Henry Holland (who had very frequent opportunities of observing his practice, and ascertaining his knowledge of medicine), for saying, that both his judgment and knowledge were very remarkable; and used with the same prudence and good sense which he exercised on all other subjects.

CHAPTER IV.

Quits Edinburgh for London—Settles in Doughty Street—Legal and other Friends—Obtains Preachership of Foundling Hospital—Refusal of Dr —— to enable him to lease a Chapel—Sermon to Volunteers—Friendship with Lord Holland—Holland House—Preachership of St John's Chapel—Lectures at Royal Institution—Poverty—Weekly Suppers—Anecdote of Sir J. Mackintosh and his Cousin—Elected to the Johnson Literary Club—The King reads his Review, and says he will never be a Bishop—Preaches on Toleration at the Temple Church—Increase of Reputation and Friends—Anecdotes.

My father, in 1803, having finished the education of his other pupil, Mr Gordon, was requested by Mr Beach to remain a year longer in Edinburgh with his son William; but, thinking this plan injurious both to his young friend and himself, he felt it his duty to decline it, and to resolve upon some course of life which might secure to himself a permanent independence; and therefore addressed the following letter to Mrs Beach on the subject:—

"*Edinburgh, January*, 1803.

"My dear Madam,

"Your son has communicated to me the very flattering request of Mr Beach and yourself, that I should continue here another year; and it is a matter of real regret to me that I should be compelled to decline any proposal which it would give you pleasure that I should accept. I have one child, and I expect another: it is absolutely my duty that I should make some exertion for their future support. The salary you give is liberal; I live here in ease and abundance; but a situation in this country leads to nothing. I have to begin the world, at the end of three years, at the very same point where I set out from; it would be the same at the end of ten. I should return to London, my friends and connexions mouldered away, my relations gone and dispersed; and myself about to begin to do at the age of forty what I ought to have begun to do at the age of twenty-five.

"That my connexion with William did not end two years ago I most heartily rejoice; for after the kindness you and Mr B. showed to me during my residence in Netherhaven, I should ever have reproached myself as the most ungrateful of human beings. That kindness I shall never forget; and I shall quit this country with a very large balance of obligation on my side, which I shall always

be proud to acknowledge. But I could not hold myself justified to my wife and family if I were to sacrifice, any longer, to the love of present ease, those exertions which every man is bound to make for the improvement of his situation.

"After all, my dear madam, are you doing right in keeping William any longer from the University? Are you not listening rather to your affection than your reason? One of the great objects of education is to accustom a young man *gradually* to become his own master. If a young man of William's great good sense cannot meet the little world of a University at twenty years of age, he cannot meet the great world at any age. It is in vain to tremble at the risk; all life is a constant risk of doing wrong. To accustom men to great risks, you must expose them, when boys, to lesser risks. If you attempt to avoid all risks, you do an injury infinitely greater than any you shun.

"You will, I am sure, be obliged to me for speaking my opinion thus freely; and if I understand you both aright, I am equally sure that I shall not have offended you by fairly laying open to you those motives which have induced me to decline an offer that I received with the greatest pleasure, as a proof of your continued good opinion. SYDNEY SMITH."

On being asked to recommend some books to Miss B—— to purchase:—

"Sir Joshua Reynolds's Lectures. Mitford's History of Greece. Orme's History of Hindostan. Vertot's Revolutions of Portugal and Sweden. Bossuet's Oraisons Funèbres. Petit Carême de Massillon. Select Sermons of Dr Barrow. Burke's Settlement of the English Colonies in America. Alison on Taste.

"The first book, though written on painting, full of all wisdom. The second, a good history. The third, highly entertaining, with ditto. The fifth, a splendid example of sound eloquence. The sixth, piety, pure language, fine style. The seventh, lofty eloquence. The eighth, neat and philosophical. The ninth, feeling and eloquence. Here, I think, is as much wisdom as you can get for eight guineas. But remember to consult your family physician, your mother. I only know the general powers of these medicines; but she will determine their adaptation to your particular constitution.

"Yours, dear Miss B——, very sincerely,
"SYDNEY SMITH."

My father was most reluctant to quit Edinburgh, where he had many valuable friends and was much sought after; and where his name would have probably continued to procure him pupils.

My mother, however was more ambitious for him than he was for himself; and feeling that he was meant for better and higher things, and that his talents were worthy of a more extensive sphere, she used all her influence to induce him to seek it where alone it was to be found. After much deliberation, and feeling that, having embraced the Church as a profession, he ought to adhere to it, he determined to yield to her wishes, plunge at once into London, and endeavour to make known, where they were most likely to be appreciated, such talents as he possessed. He therefore broke up his camp in Edinburgh, much to his own and his friends' regret, and established himself in London in the year 1803.

On his first arrival there, he took a small house in Doughty Street, Russell Square, attracted thither by the legal society which then resided in that part of London, and of which he was always very fond.

This removal to London turned out to be the wisest step my father could have taken. Yet, friendless as he then was, and obnoxious to Government as he had become by his principles and writings, and without any obvious means of increasing his income, it was not carried through without considerable anxiety and a severe and courageous struggle with poverty; and, to add to his difficulties and anxieties, soon after his arrival in town his family was increased by the birth of a son.

My grandmother, Mrs Pybus, whose death, as has been mentioned, took place shortly before my father quitted Edinburgh, had left my mother her own and her eldest daughter's (Lady Fletcher's) jewels, which were of some value. My mother, feeling that such ornaments were unbecoming in her present position, insisted upon their being sold as soon as they came to London; and she describes my father's "comical anxiety lest mankind should recover from their illusion, and cease to value such glittering baubles before they could be sold." The negotiation begun with the jeweller, Sydney was not easy till it was accomplished; and even then, she says, she does not think he was quite easy in his mind at having helped to continue the illusion by accepting so large a price for them.

Soon after settling in his little house in Doughty Street, my father appears to have received a very liberal offer from Mr Beach, to which the following letter was the answer, and it is pleasant to be able to record such sentiments mutually existing after so close and trying a connection between them, of six years' duration.

"*Doughty Street, August*, 1803.

"My dear Sir,

"You will excuse me for being particular about trifles, but the

interest of the small sum left in your hands MUST be four, and not five per cent. You say, 'Be assured I never thought of keeping your money in my hands without paying you five per cent for it.' I should, my dear Sir, have been acquainted with you for six years to very little purpose if I could have supposed you had entertained any such thought. I am very sure you had rather give me ten per cent then one per cent for my money. I will do you the justice to say, that in all transactions which respect property, I have uniformly found and seen you desirous that the advantage should be against you rather than for you; and I have never seen you *so* desirous of relinquishing advantages as when it was in your power, from the situation of the other party, to obtain them.

"I have found out an excellent successor to Cæsar,*—a young puppy, that will, I think, be larger than that sagacious favourite. Discuss with Mrs Beach whether you will accept of him, and let us know when we come.

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Of the early part of his career in London I of course know nothing, and recollect hearing but little. He early formed the acquaintance, and obtained the friendship, of several eminent lawyers then living in that neighbourhood. The most distinguished of these were Sir S. Romilly, Mr Scarlett (afterwards Lord Abinger), and Sir J. Mackintosh. To these may be added Dr Marcet, M. Dumont, Mr Whishaw, Lord Dudley (then Mr Ward), Mr Sharpe, Mr Rogers, Mr Luttrell, and Mr Tenant. The latter, under the most uncouth appearance, combined such simplicity, warmth of heart, and varied knowledge, as made him a general favourite in this little circle. The mysteries of his *ménage* often afforded great amusement to his friends. He lived in a small lodging, and his establishment consisted solely of an old black servant, who tyrannized over him in no small degree, called Dominique. He was overheard one morning calling from his bed, "Dominique! Dominique!" but no Dominique appeared. "Why don't you bring me my stockings, Dominique?" "Can't come, massa." "Why can't you come, Dominique?" "Can't come massa, I'm dronke." Mr Tenant, who probably thought it a law of nature that Dominique should be drunk, for he was seldom otherwise, submitted with the greatest meekness.

My father also became acquainted with some of the French emigrants, of whom there were many at this time resident in London and its neighbourhood; amongst these, some, from their cultivation and the refinement of their manners, became very agreeable additions to his society. Of these, I remember a M.

* A magnificent Newfoundland dog.

Dutens,* and a charming old Abbé, who became quite one of the family. I can recall his pale, mild face, his thin figure, smart shoe-buckles, little cane, and snuff-box, though I forget his name. He was bent on inventing a *universal language;* and used in his simplicity constantly to come and consult my father, who, much amused by his project, suggested a few grammatical difficulties from time to time. The poor old Abbé, out of all patience, at last exclaimed, "Oh non, monsieur, ce sont là des bagatelles! La seule difficulté que je trouve c'est de faire agir tous les rois d'Europe au même instant." My father admitted that this was a slight difficulty; but we left London, or the old Abbé left England, before he had solved it.

In the following letter my father speaks of the illness of an infant son, who died shortly after, and whose death is touchingly alluded to in some of the letters to Jeffrey

"*Doughty Street, October* 8, 1803.

'My dear Madam,

"I promised I would let you know the issue of my little boy's illness, because, having mentioned his illness as a reason why I could not meet Mr Beach and William at Oxford, I was sure you would have the kindness to interest yourself in the event. On Tuesday he had two fits, and on Thursday night eight; last night he escaped; to-day is much better, and I think is almost out of danger. You will think my apology good enough for not meeting Mr Beach at Oxford, which, but for this accident, I certainly should. I am very sure, my dear madam, you would be glad to see us; and in future times of prosperity and peace I hope we shall pass some happy hours together.

"I beg leave to differ from you respecting the danger incurred by William,—not to flatter you into a security which you ought not to enjoy, but to banish the notion of a risk to which you are not exposed. All young men who begin to manage themselves may possibly manage themselves badly; but I never saw a young man for whose safety I should be under less apprehensions. He is prudent, calm, not apt to contract sudden friendships, and of a very excellent understanding. From what points of his character you derive your fears for his conduct I cannot conceive; nor can I in any degree subscribe to your opinion that a University life is more pregnant with danger to a character such as his than to that of his elder brother.

"I shall be extremely happy to keep up my correspondence with William, and I wish him well most affectionately and sincerely. If any little suggestions of mine can be of service, I will not fail to

* Author of "Mémoires d'un Voyageur qui se repose."

make them; but you are well aware that all advice is a mere feather in the scale, and that it rests upon himself to take his place in society. SYDNEY SMITH."

My father says, speaking of his prospects in London :—"I have as yet found no place to preach in; it is more difficult than I had imagined. Two or three random sermons I have discharged, and thought I perceived that the greater part of the congregation thought me mad. The clerk was as pale as death in helping me off with my gown, for fear I should bite him. I am about to preach a charity sermon for schools. I shall take some pains with the subject, and extend it into the general question of education of the poor. It is a subject I have long wished to discuss from the pulpit; it is very comprehensive and important, and loaded with prejudices and misrepresentations."

On receiving an invitation in 1804 from Mrs Beach, my father writes :—

"*Doughty Street, May* 1804.

"My dear Madam,

"Mr Beach and yourself were so obliging as to invite us to visit you this summer; but we could not be happy if we were to leave our little girl behind. Now, other people's little girls are very troublesome animals, and nothing would be more painful to Mrs Sydney and myself than to intrude upon your hospitality. You will, therefore, I am sure, have the goodness to inform us candidly whether or not she may come. If it should be convenient to you to receive so large a party, the period most agreeable to us will be towards the beginning of August, if that will suit you. I am broiled to death by this weather. Neither the Ministry nor the Opposition can keep their forces together, and everybody is going out of town. Even in my quarter of the town the people make a show of going away, block up their windows, and retire into the back rooms. I hope this letter, my dear madam, will find you more cool than it leaves me; and I remain, with best regards, sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH."

In the summer of 1804 the alarm occasioned by the idea of French invasion was rapidly increasing, and volunteers were pouring in from all ranks and classes. One of the earliest sermons my father seems to have been called upon to preach was on this subject, before a large body of volunteers collected in the Metropolis. He closes it by saying, "I have a boundless confidence in the English character; I believe that they have more real religion, more probity, more knowledge, and more genuine worth, than exists in the whole world besides. They are the guardians of pure

Christianity; and from this prostituted nation of merchants (as they are in derision called) I believe more heroes will spring up in the hour of danger than all the military nations of ancient and modern Europe have ever produced. Into the hands of God, then, and his ever-merciful Son, we cast ourselves, and wait in humble patience the result. First we ask for victory; but, if that cannot be, we have only one other prayer—we implore for death."

A year or two after, he preached another sermon for the suffering Swiss.

About this time he made the acquaintance of Sir Thomas Barnard, who was so much struck with his sense and originality, that he recommended him to the preachership of the Foundling Hospital, at £50 per annum; which employment, small as was the remuneration, was gladly accepted. Slight as this service was, and probably suggested more for the benefit of the Hospital than for that of my father, I must still feel grateful to one who thus held out a helping hand to a clever and friendless young man struggling with the difficulties of the world and eager to perform the duties of his profession; a kindness which was the more felt, from the contrast it afforded to the impediments most unexpectedly thrown in his way about the same time by others.

A chapel, then occupied by a sect of Dissenters calling themselves the New Jerusalem, and belonging to Mr D——, was most kindly offered by him on lease to my father, if he could obtain the necessary license from the rector of the parish. His earnest and touching appeal to one he believed to be his friend, to grant this; and thus enable him to support his family and benefit the parish by his exertions in his profession, will be seen in the following letters; and with what result, and for what reasons rejected. I mention no names, as I wish to excite no angry feelings, and both men are now gone to a higher tribunal; but I cannot refrain from stating one of the many difficulties my father had to contend with in his profession.

To Dr. ——.

"*London.*

"Dear Sir,

"I am about to address myself to you upon a subject which very materially concerns my happiness and interest, and on which therefore I am sure you will consider, with as much disposition to befriend a brother clergyman as you can entertain consistently with your duty. Messrs. —— and Co. have agreed to let me a lease of the chapel in —— Street: will you, *under any restrictions, and upon any conditions, allow me to preach there?*

"In the first place, I cannot doubt that where a place of worship is to exist in your parish, you would rather that the worship of the

Church of England were carried on there, than that it should belong to such sectaries as the Christians of the New Jerusalem (as they entitle themselves). I should have greater reluctance in making this request if the places of worship in your parish were thinly attended, or if they were more than sufficient for the population of the parish; but, on the contrary, numbers are sent away every Sunday from your church, for want of room. Many families have in vain waited for years to obtain seats there; and the other chapels-of-ease I understand to be quite filled, though they cannot be said to be so overflowing. This chapel does not hold above three hundred and fifty persons, exclusive of servants; the mere overflowings of your church would fill it.

"It is, I admit, of great importance for you to consider whether I am, or am not, such a person as you would wish to perform the duties of a minister in your parish. This you can easily enough ascertain. I have officiated nearly two years in Berkeley Chapel, where the Primate of Ireland, the Bishop of Lichfield, and Dr Dutens have seats: of the two former gentlemen I know nothing; with Dr Dutens I am well acquainted. If these three dignified and respectable clergymen have any objection to make to my doctrines, I do not wish that the request I make to you should be successful, and I am the first to withdraw it. But if they say of me that my preaching commands attention, that I have any talent for enforcing moral and religious truth, and that I may be beneficially entrusted with such an office in any situation,—such testimony, I am sure, will have its due weight with you, and if you can let me preach, you will. It has often been said of the proprietors of chapels, that they are rather apt to tell such truths as are pleasant, than such as are useful.' I appeal to the same gentlemen, whether the fear of offending any one, let his rank and situation be what it may, has ever prevented me from enforcing duties on which I thought myself bound to animadvert; and you will excuse me if I say that you yourself, who have nothing to gain by pleasing or to lose by offending, have not attacked the vices of the rich and the great with more honest freedom than I have done, though your superior years, station, and understanding have of course enabled you to do it with much greater effect.

"My pretensions however of this nature must of course be judged by others. But of my situation in life (as I am the only judge of it) I hope you will allow me to say a few words. I am a married man, with two children, and as I am young my family may increase; I have a very small fortune, no preferment, nor any friends who are likely to give me any. The chapel where I preach at present will, I fancy, soon be sold; and it is not impossible that the clergyman who can afford to purchase it may choose to preach himself. It is

not for want of exertion, my situation in the church is not better, for I have not been idle in the narrow and obscure field which is open to the inferior clergy. I hope you will have the kindness to consider these circumstances, before you refuse me the opportunity of supporting my family and bettering my situation by my own exertions.

"A few years ago, my dear Sir, when your situation was what mine is, such considerations would have touched you, and you would have acknowledged their force. You know well the difficulties and the miseries of a curate's life; and I am sure you are the last man in the world to forget them, merely because you have overcome them with so much honour and distinction. I am aware it will be necessary to apply to the patron of the living if your answer should be favourable to me, but I fancy it is regular to make the first application to you; and I rather write than call upon you, because I think it unfair, on such subjects, to take gentlemen by surprise, where sufficient leisure ought to be given for deliberation. In a week's time I will call upon you for an answer; if you grant my request, I shall feel very grateful to you. I shall receive your answer, with great anxiety, and am,

"My dear Sir, with great respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

From the Rev. Sydney Smith to Dr ——.

"Dear Sir,

"If I do not hear from you to the contrary, I will call upon you after morning service on Sunday. I forgot to mention in my letter to you, that Mr Barnard* gave me leave to make any use I please of his name in the way of reference. I beg you to recollect that the question before you for your decision, is a choice between fanaticism and the worship of the Church of England in your parish; one or the other must exist. If I doubted of any of the doctrines of the Church of England, if I were possessed of any foolish and absurd tenets of my own, I should be immediately qualified by law to open the chapel; I hope you will not disqualify me merely because I am a firm and zealous advocate in the same cause with yourself, for this would be to give a bounty on dissent and heresy. It would be a very different question if I asked you to let me open a new place of worship; but I merely ask you to change that worship from the present method, which you completely disapprove, to that which you completely approve and eminently practise.

"Excuse the trouble I give you; but when a poor clergyman sees an honest and respectable method of improving his situation

* Afterwards Sir Thomas Barnard.

in life, you cannot wonder at his anxiety. You will make me a very happy man, if you consent to my request.

"With great respect, &c. &c.,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Dr ——'s first answer is not given, as my father's next letter states its contents.

From the Rev. Sydney Smith to Dr ——.

"Dear Sir,

"The principal objection which your letter contained against the permission I requested, is the reluctance you state yourself to feel to imposing an obligation on your successors. Would you then object to give me leave to preach during your life, leaving it entirely open, by such limited concession, to those who succeed you, to continue or suspend the permission? Let me place myself entirely out of the question, and put the argument to you:—if any new person whom you may allow to preach in your parish, is a man very little calculated for such an office, it is not probable that people will quit the Established places of worship to resort to him; if he is, it is probable he will draw many to church who would not otherwise go, and that the mass of people who attend public worship in that parish will be materially increased; which, I presume, is a consequence that every parish minister sincerely wishes for and would make some effort to obtain. I beg you to reflect, as I said in my last note (which crossed your letter), that I am not asking you to let me open a place of worship in your parish,—it is already open,—but I ask you to let me change the absurd and disgraceful devotion which is going on there at present (and will go on there still), for the devotion of the Church of England. I ask you to give me the preference over a low and contemptible fanatic; and will you allow me, without the slightest intention of offending you, to lay before you the seeming inconsistency of your answer?

"You say, 'I allow you have considerable talents for preaching, I know you have been well educated, I am sure you will be of great use, but I give a decided preference over you to a very foolish and a very ignorant Methodist, whose extravagance is debauching the minds of the lower class of my parishioners, and whom I should be heartily glad to see driven out of my parish.' Excuse my freedom, but such are inevitably to be the consequences deduced from your answer.

"I appeal to you again, whether anything can be so enormous and unjust, as that that privilege should be denied to the ministers of the Church of England which every man who has folly and presumption enough to differ from it can immediately enjoy? I hope

you will give these observations some consideration, and, as soon as you have, return me your answer upon them.

"You observe that what I ask is unnecessary, and that it is an innovation; but I sincerely hope you would not refuse me so great an advantage, unless it was pernicious as well as unnecessary; and that if the plan I suggest is an improvement, you will not reject it merely because it is an innovation.

"I thank you very kindly for all the good you say of me: I will endeavour to deserve it.

"I am, my dear Sir, truly yours,
"SYDNEY SMITH."

From Dr —— to the Rev. Sydney Smith.

"Dear Sir,

"I was in hopes I had so expressed myself in my letter of Wednesday, that you would have immediately seen my unwillingness to admit the arrangement you propose respecting this chapel; although at the same time I am sorry to be an obstacle in the way of your interest, I can only add, that the expediency of the measure having been considered by my predecessors, I mean to abide by their decision. I hope never to be offended, Sir, at the freedom of any who are so kind as to teach me to know myself; and the inconsistency of my letter to you, which you are so good as to point out, is, alas! an addition to the many inconsistencies of which I fear I have been too often guilty through life.

"You will, I dare say, be glad to hear that there exists a hope that, ere long, the dissenters from the Establishment will not enjoy greater privileges than the ministers of the Establishment themselves.

"I have the honour to be, dear Sir,
"Your obliged servant,
"———."

Thus, in spite of his most earnest endeavours to obtain employment, he remained poor for many years; indeed it has often been an enigma to me how, in these early days, my father contrived to meet the necessary expenses of settling in London; but I have lately discovered, from an old memorandum, that during this early period his eldest brother Robert kindly contributed £100 per annum for a few years; and that in 1809, when all the expenses of his removal into Yorkshire took place, he lent my father about £500; an assistance which must have been of the greatest importance to him at this particular time.

I believe he had not been long in London before he became known, and his society sought after, in various quarters. One of

the earliest friendships he formed on coming there was that of Lord Holland, whose acquaintance he had previously made when on a visit to his eldest brother Robert, at college; and the subsequent marriage of this brother with Miss Vernon, Lord Holland's aunt, perhaps the more inclined Lord Holland to cultivate the society of one with whose merits he was then but slightly acquainted.

I have often heard my father speak of his first introduction to Holland House,—the most formidable ordeal, considering the talents of his host and hostess, and the society always to be found there, that a young and obscure man could well go through. He was shy too then; but I believe, in spite of the shyness, they soon discovered and acknowledged his merits, and deemed him no unmeet company for their world—and what a world it was!

I can hardly write of my father, and not pause a moment to speak of that society of which he afterwards so frequently formed a part, and to which he was bound through life by every tie of social enjoyment, gratitude, and friendship. The world has rarely seen, and will rarely, if ever, see again, all that was to be found within the walls of Holland House. Genius and merit, in whatever rank of life, became a passport there, and all that was choicest and rarest in Europe seemed attracted to that spot as to their natural soil.

Then the house itself,—a beautiful specimen of the olden times; with its ancient banqueting-hall, recalling traditions of past grandeur; and its noble library, full of the wisdom of ages, and hung round with the portraits of those who so often animated it with their presence,—ought not to be forgotten.

How melancholy, to feel that so many of those who, together with their much-beloved host, acted so great a part in our own times, and have left names that will live long after them, are now gone!

My father found in Lord Holland one able and willing to appreciate him, and whose society it was impossible to enjoy without loving as well as admiring him; and they formed together one of those true friendships, so rare in human life, "which, like the shadows of evening, increase even till the setting of the sun." I do not of course presume to speak of Lord Holland but in reference to the charm of his intercourse with my father, which I had such frequent opportunities of witnessing; and it always seemed to me on such occasions that there never were two men who, from the constitution of their minds, were more calculated to enjoy and understand each other's character than Lord Holland and Sydney Smith. The same intense love of public liberty and public happiness, the same exquisite enjoyment of wit and humour, the same clearness and conciseness of understanding, with great constitutional gaiety of spirits, made their conversation more charming to listen to than it is well possible to conceive without having done so, and evi-

dently productive of the purest enjoyment to themselves. It was short, varied, interspersed with wit, illustration, and anecdote on both sides; in short, it was the perfection of social intercourse, a sort of *mental dram-drinking*, rare as it was delightful and intoxicating.

From the opportunities thus afforded my father of meeting at Holland House all the best Whig society, his acquaintance in London increased rapidly; and as he became generally known there, his company was eagerly sought for.

Meantime his reputation was spreading in other and better ways than by the powers of his conversation alone. His negotiation to obtain a license from the clergyman of the parish, to preach in the chapel then occupied by the sect of the New Jerusalem, failed, as we have seen; but in addition to the evening preachership of the Foundling Hospital, he had for two years, at the request of Mr Bowerbank, the proprietor of Berkeley Chapel, in John Street, Berkeley-square, officiated as the morning preacher there. The chapel had been so deserted (though the position was very advantageous), that Mr Bowerbank had been for some time endeavouring to dispose of it. In a few weeks after my father accepted it, not a seat was to be had: gentlemen and ladies frequently stood in the aisles throughout the whole service. All idea was then given up of disposing of it by the proprietor; and till my father left London, in 1809, he continued morning preacher there, alternately with Fitzroy Chapel. The concise, bold raciness of his style was singularly calculated to stir up a lazy London congregation, accustomed to slumber over their weekly sermon; and the earnestness of his manner, I have reason to believe, caused many to think who never thought before.* Of the effect his preaching produced at different periods of his life I have the most flattering evidence. When such a man as Mr Dugald Stewart exclaimed, after hearing him preach, "Those original and unexpected ideas gave me a thrilling sensation of sublimity never before awakened by any other oratory;" when his virtuous friend Horner expresses his admiration of his eloquence, and of the effect it produced on his congregation; when the Bishop of Norwich writes, on hearing him in the country, "He plainly showed he felt what he said, and meant that others should feel too;" when another very distinguished writer, on reading his sermons, says, "I opened on the Sermon on Toleration, and could not lay it down; the wisdom, truth, and beauty of it, and the true Christian spirit shining through every sentence, and illuminating the whole piece as with a celestial light, perfectly enchanted me;

* My father had the satisfaction more than once of receiving letters of gratitude, assuring him that his preaching had not been in vain, and had stopped the writer in a course of guilt and dissipation.

as he was one of the wisest of men, so I am sure he was one of the best;" when one as true as he is distinguished in his profession reminded me the other day how he had both seen and heard my father's emotion in the pulpit;—when such testimony is given by such men, united to that of many others which will appear in the course of the narrative, we are surely justified in affirming that, although originally entering the Church reluctantly, yet having done so, he devoted all the powers of his heart and mind to the profession to which he had before devoted his life.

In addition to his fame as a clergyman, he obtained considerable increase of reputation by a course of lectures on Moral Philosophy, which Sir Thomas Barnard, who interested himself much about the Royal Institution, proposed to him to give; and which, though my father speaks of them as without merit in one of his letters to his friend Dr Whewell, afford, as I am told, the strongest evidence of the clearness of his intellect and the justness of his opinions. They gained so much at the time from the charm of his voice and manner of delivery, that the sensation they created in London is perhaps unexampled.

"You would be amused," says his friend Mr Horner, in his Letters, "to hear the account he gives of his own qualifications for the task, and his mode of manufacturing philosophy; he will do the thing very cleverly, I have little doubt." *

"I was," says Mrs Marcet, "a perfect enthusiast during the delivery of those lectures. They remain, but he who gave a very soul to them by his inimitable manner is gone! He who at one moment inspired his hearers with such awe and reverence by the solemn piety of his manner, that his discourse seemed converted into a sermon, at others, by the brilliancy of his wit, made us die of laughing. The impression made on me by these lectures, though so long ago, is still sufficiently strong to recall his manner in many of the most striking passages."

"I was present at the lectures forty years ago," says the late Sir Robert Peel, "and was a very young man at the time; but I have not forgotten the effect which was given to the speech of Logan, the Indian Chief, by the tone and spirit in which it was recited." . . . "I do not find," he adds, "some verses I recollect to have been quoted by Mr Sydney Smith, to which equal effect was given."

* An eye-witness says:—"All Albemarle street and a part of Grafton Street were rendered impassable by the concourse of carriages assembled there during the time of their delivery. There was not sufficient room for the persons assembling: the lobbies were filled, and the doors into them from the lecture-room were left open; the steps leading into its area were all occupied; many persons, to obtain seats, came an hour before the time. The next year galleries were erected, which had never before been required, and the success was complete. He continued to lecture there for three consecutive years."

These verses alluded to were a beautiful little song of Mrs Opie's, "Go, youth beloved, in distant glades:" and, in a letter to my mother, she gives an amusing account of my father suddenly telling her, as she met him at the entrance of the lecture-room, that he was going to quote it. She describes the struggle between her timidity and her vanity, whether she should enter; and the new light in which both she and her poem seemed to shine in the eyes of her friends, after this notice of its beauty in his lecture.

Mr Horner, in his Life, speaks of these Lectures, calling my father by the *nom de guerre* he bore in their circle, of the Bishop of Mickleham,—the name of his friend Mr Sharpe's cottage in Surrey, where they often assembled.

"His Lordship's success has been beyond all possible conjecture:—from six to eight hundred hearers, not a seat to be procured, even if you go there an hour before the time. Nobody else, to be sure, could have executed such an undertaking with the least chance of success. For who could make such a mixture of odd paradox, quaint fun, manly sense, liberal opinions, and striking language?"

Since my father's death, the Lectures (a considerable portion of which was fortunately rescued by my mother from the flames, to which he had as usual condemned them) have been given to the public, which has confirmed the opinion of his friend Horner. Lord Jeffrey, to whom they were submitted in manuscript, at first dissuaded their publication; but, on receiving a printed copy, with his usual candour and sweetness of disposition, he wrote to my mother, only three days before the fatal illness which terminated his noble life:—"I am now satisfied that, in what I then said, I did great and grievous injustice to the merit of these lectures, and was quite wrong in dissuading their publication, or concluding they would add nothing to the reputation of the author; on the contrary, my firm impression is, that, with few exceptions, they will do him as much credit as anything he ever wrote, and produce on the whole a stronger impression of the force and vivacity of his intellect, as well as a truer and more engaging view of his character, than most of what the world has yet seen of his writings."

The following lines have been kindly sent me by Miss Berry's executor, Sir Frankland Lewis, as found amongst her papers; and as Miss Berry, from her talents, beauty, and high character, her friendship with Horace Walpole, her ninety years of life (thus as it were connecting two centuries), and the distinguished society always to be found at her house, almost belongs to history, these lines possess a value independent of their intrinsic merits.

ODE BY MISS BERRY,

ON BUYING A NEW BONNET TO GO TO ONE OF MR SYDNEY SMITH'S LECTURES—"ON THE SUBLIME."

Lo! where the gaily-vestured throng,
Fair Learning's train, are seen,
Wedged in close ranks her walls along,
And up her benches green!

Unfolded to their mental eye
Thy awful form, Sublimity,
The moral teacher shows;
Sublimity! of silence born,
And solitude, 'mid "caves forlorn,"
And dimly-vision'd woes,
Or steadfast worth that, inly great,
Mocks the malignity of fate.

Whisper'd Pleasure's dulcet sound
Murmurs the crowded room around,
And Wisdom, borne on Fashion's pinion,
Exulting hails her new dominion.
Oh! both on me your influence shed;
Dwell in my heart, and deck my head!

Where'er a broader, browner shade
The shaggy beaver throws,
And with the ample feather's aid,
O'er-canopies the nose;
Where'er, with smooth and silken pile,
Lingering in solemn pause awhile,
The crimson velvet glows;
From some high bench's giddy brink,
With me, my friend begins to think,
As bolt upright we sit,
That dress, like dogs, should have its day,
That beavers are too hot for May,
And velvets quite unfit.
Then Taste, in maxims sweet, I draw
From her unerring lip—
"How light, how simple are the straw!
How delicate the chip!"

Hush'd is the speaker's powerful voice,
The audience melt away;
I fly to fix my final choice,
And bless the instructive day.

The milliner officious pours
Of hats and caps her ready stores,
The unbought elegance of spring.
Some, wide, disclose the full round face,
Some, shadowy, lend a modest grace,
And stretch their sheltering wing.
Here clustering grapes appear to shed
Their luscious juices on the head,
And cheat the longing eye:
So round the Phrygian monarch hung
Fair fruits, that from his parched tongue
For ever seemed to fly

Here early blooms the summer rose:
Here ribbons wreathe fantastic bows;
There plays gay plumage of a thousand dyes,—
Visions of beauty, spare my aching eyes!

Ye cumbrous fashions, crowd not on my head!
Mine be the chip of purest white,
Swan-like, and as her feathers light,
When on the still wave spread;
And let it wear the graceful dress
Of unadorned simpleness!
Ah, frugal wish! Ah, pleasing thought!
Ah, hope indulged in vain!
Of modest fancy cheaply bought,
A stranger yet to Payne!
With undissembled grief I tell,
(For sorrow never comes too late),
The simplest bonnet in Pall Mall
Is sold for one pound eight.

To calculation's sober view,
That searches every plan,
Who keep the old, or buy the new,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the shabby and the gay
Must meet the sun's meridian ray,
The air—the dust—the damp:
This, shall the sudden shower despoil,
That, slow decay by gradual soil,
These, envious boxes cramp.

Who will, their squander'd gold may pay,
Who will, our taste deride;
We'll scorn the fashion of the day
With philosophic pride.

Methinks we thus, in accents low,
Might Sydney Smith address:—
"Poor moralist! and what art thou,
Who never spoke of dress?
Thy mental hero never hung
Suspended on a tailor's tongue,
In agonising doubt!
Thy tale no fluttering female show'd,
Who languish'd for the newest mode,
Yet dares to live without!" *

The proceeds of these lectures,—for which, after the first series, he was allowed to name his own terms,—enabled him to furnish his new house in Orchard Street, where he continued to live during the remainder of his residence in London, and where two more children were born to him; his son Douglas, and his youngest daughter, Emily.

In this house, though from the various sources mentioned his

* I find that these verses have been erroneously attributed to Miss Berry; they were really written by her friend Miss C. Fanshawe, on the occasion of one of my father's lectures, and sent by her to Miss Berry.

means were slightly increased, yet he still remained poor. But it was poverty in its most pleasing form; not the struggle with wealth, the false shame, the outward show, the constant seeming, which we so often witness in the world, and which form the real sting of poverty; but it was the poverty of a man of sense who respected himself.

All was consistent about him: the comfort and happiness of home he considered as the "grammar of life;" and his house, although plain, often in every sense of the word, was all his life the perfection of comfort. Regarding domestic comfort as so important, he thought no trouble too great, no detail too small, to merit his attention; and, although brought up in wealth and luxury, affection soon taught his wife to second him. He never affected to be what he was not. He never concealed the thought, labour, and struggle it often cost him to obtain the simple comforts of life for those he loved; and as to its luxuries, he exercised the most rigid self-denial. In such matters, his favourite motto, which through life he inculcated on his family, was, "Avoid shame, but do not seek glory: nothing so expensive as glory;" and this he applied to every detail of his establishment. Nothing could be plainer than his table, yet his society often attracted the wealthy to share his single dish. Mr Horner writes to Lady Mackintosh, "My best hours are still spent where I have often met you, especially in Doughty Street."

The pleasantest society at his house was to be found at the little weekly suppers which he established; giving a general invitation to about twenty or thirty persons, who used to come when they pleased; and occasionally adding to, or varying them by accidental or invited guests. At these suppers there was no attempt at display, nothing to tempt the palate; but they were most eagerly sought after; and were I to begin enumerating the guests usually found there, no one would wonder that they were so. There are still a few living who can look back to them, and I have always found them to do so with a sigh of regret. There was no restraint but that of good taste,—no formality,—a happy mixture of men and women, the foolish and the wise, the grave and the gay,—and sometimes conversation was varied by music. Horner mentions in his "Memoir" one of these evenings, saying, "At Sydney Smith's the happiest day I remember to have ever spent; Mackintosh, Wishaw, Sharp, Rogers, and three interesting women of unlike characters." It is stated in the Life of Sir James Mackintosh, that a great part of this choice little society used to meet likewise every week at Sir James's house; and one present says, "These social meetings left so delightful an impression on the minds of all those who composed them, that many plans were

formed, even some years after, to renew them on Sir James's return to England; but, alas! no pleasure is renewed."

To these suppers occasionally came a country cousin of my father's,—a simple, warm-hearted rustic; and she used to come up to him and whisper, "Now, Sydney, I know these are all very remarkable men; do tell me who they are." "Oh yes," said Sydney, laughing, "that is Hannibal," pointing to Mr Wishaw; "he lost his leg in the Carthaginian war; and that is Socrates," pointing to Luttrell; "and that is Solon," pointing to Horner,—"you have heard of Solon?" The girl opened her ears, eyes, and mouth with admiration, half doubting, half believing that Sydney was making fun of her; but perfectly convinced that if they were not the individuals in question, they were something quite as great.

It was on occasion of one of these suppers that Sir James Mackintosh happened to bring with him a raw Scotch cousin, an ensign in a Highland regiment. On hearing the name of his host, he suddenly turned round, and, nudging Sir James, said in an audible whisper, "Is that the great Sir Sudney?" "Yes, yes," said Sir James, much amused; and giving my father the hint, on the instant he assumed the military character, performed the part of the hero of Acre to perfection, fought all his battles over again, and showed how he had charged the Turks, to the infinite delight of the young Scotchman, who was quite enchanted with the kindness and condescension of "the great Sir Sudney," as he called him, and to the absolute torture of the other guests, who were bursting with suppressed laughter at the scene before them. At last, after an evening of the most inimitable acting on the part both of my father and Sir James, nothing would serve the young Highlander but setting off, at twelve o'clock at night, to fetch the piper of his regiment, to pipe to "the great Sir Sudney," who said he had never heard the bagpipes; upon which the whole party broke up and dispersed instantly, for Sir James said his Scotch cousin would infallibly cut his throat if he discovered his mistake. A few days afterwards, when Sir James Mackintosh and his Scotch cousin were walking in the streets, they met my father with my mother on his arm. He introduced her as his wife, upon which the Scotch cousin said in a low voice to Sir James, and looking at my mother, "I did na ken the great Sir Sudney was married." "Why, no," said Sir James, a little embarrassed, and winking at him, "not ex-act-ly married; only an Egyptian slave he brought over with him; Fatima—you know—you understand." My mother was long known in the little circle as Fatima.

By this time many of his Scotch friends had likewise come to England, which offered a wider field for the exercise of their talents: Horner, Lord Webb Seymour, Mr Brougham, and others,

were his intimate friends, and contributed much to the charm of his little suppers.

He was early elected a member of a very agreeable dining club, calling itself by the modest title of *The King of Clubs*, to which he often alludes with pleasure in his letters; but it was not until the year 1838 that he was admitted into that remarkable literary club established by Dr Johnson and his friends, calling itself *The Club*, of which Dr Johnson says, "There is no club like our club." On its books may be seen the names, not only of Johnson, Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Burke, Gibbon, &c.; but a list of all the most eminent men that England has produced in every rank of society since its foundation. M. Van de Weyer, the Belgian Minister is, I believe, the only foreigner who has ever been admitted; and, as was observed to him, on his admission, by a distinguished member of the club, he has received the highest title of naturalisation that it is in the power of this country to bestow.

My father was now, with many of his early friends, contributing largely to the Edinburgh Review; and as his powers and his principles became more known, he of course became more and more obnoxious to the party in power, and was the object of much abuse and misrepresentation. One of the earliest recollections I have, is that of being stopped at our door, when returning from a walk, by Mr ——, who desired me to tell my father that the King had been reading his reviews, and had said, "He was a very clever fellow, but that he would never be a bishop." He felt this abuse and misrepresentation; and the hopelessness of his situation, where, in his profession, no merit or exertion of his own could advance him a single step, and where his only alternative was poverty or baseness. But he seldom allowed this feeling to depress him; for he thought, with his sensible friend Sharpe, "If you cannot be happy in one way, be happy in another. Many in this world run after felicity, like an absent man hunting for his hat, while all the time it is on his head or in his hand." And he used to say, "One must look downwards as well as upwards in human life. Though many have passed you in the race, there are many you have left behind. Better a dinner of herbs and a pure conscience, than the stalled ox and infamy, is my version."

An anecdote has lately reached me from a very early friend, which has quite delighted me; it is an example of what I observed in my father through life,—that having once made up his mind as to what he ought to do, he did it, be the consequences what they might to himself. It was on this principle that he entered the Church, and on this he acted in it, as well as on every important occasion of his private life. He was going to preach at the Foundling Hospital, and had selected a sermon containing a

strong attack upon certain opinions which he thought were rapidly increasing, and producing most injurious effects on religion. My mother saw and knew the sermon, and exclaimed, "Oh, Sydney, do change that sermon; I know it will give such offence to our friends the F——'s, should they be there this evening." "I fear it will," said my father, "and am sorry for it; but, Kate, do you think, if I feel it my duty to preach such a sermon at all, that I can refrain from doing so from the fear of giving offence?" The sermon was preached, and the offence was given. He felt the loss of his friends deeply, for he loved and valued those whom he had offended. Time, however, produced its usual effects on really good men: my father lived to regain their friendship, and I have reason to believe there are few who love or honour his memory more than the only survivor now left of that family.

In the year 1807 he preached a sermon on Toleration, in the Temple Church, and was requested to publish it. He did so, and added the following preface:

"This sermon is not published from a belief that it has any merit in composition, or any claim to originality of thinking, but to bear my share of testimony against a religious clamour, which is very foolish in all those in whom it is not very wicked.

"I am sorry to write what I know it has been extremely disagreeable to many of those before whom I am in the habit of preaching to hear, but I should be infinitely more sorry that this or any other apprehension should prevent me from doing what I believe to be my duty.

"Charity towards those who dissent from us on religious opinions is always a proper subject for the pulpit. If such discussions militate against the views of any particular party, the fault is not in him who is thus erroneously said to introduce politics into the Church, but in those who have really brought the Church into politics. It does not cease to be our duty to guard men against religious animosities, because it suits the purpose of others to inflame them; nor are we to consider the great question of religious toleration as a theme fit only for the factions of Parliament, because intolerance has lately been made the road to power. It is no part of the duty of a clergyman to preach upon subjects purely political, but it is not therefore his duty to avoid religious subjects which have been distorted into political subjects, especially when the consequence of that distortion is a general state of error and of passion."

Meanwhile he had the satisfaction of feeling that he was not leading a useless life. He writes:—"It pleases me sometimes to think of the very great number of important subjects which

have been discussed in the Edinburgh Review in so enlightened a manner; it is a sort of magazine of liberal sentiments, which I hope will be read by the rising generation, and infuse into them a proper contempt for their parents' stupid and unphilosophical prejudices." He had also the consolation, as his character displayed itself, of obtaining what he said was the one "earthly good worth struggling for, the love and esteem of many good and great men." Among these, the two most intimately associated with his career in after-life were Lord Grey and Lord Carlisle (then Lord Morpeth). To the constant affection and unvarying kindness of Lord Holland and these two friends, he was indebted for most of the pleasures that were shed upon a path which, to a man of less energy of character and buoyancy of spirits, would have been for many years a dark and dreary one. But there was within himself a natural source of happiness—a perpetual flow of spirits—a cheerfulness of disposition, for which he often thanked God, as one of the greatest benefits conferred upon him.

At this period of his life, indeed, his spirits were often such that they were more like the joyousness and playfulness of a clever schoolboy than the sobriety and gravity of the father of a family; and his gaiety was so irresistible and so infectious, that it carried everything before it. Nothing could withstand the contagion of that ringing, joy-inspiring laugh, which seemed to spring from the fresh, genuine enjoyment he felt at the multitude of unexpected images which sprang up in his mind, and succeeded each other with a rapidity that hardly allowed his hearers to follow him, but left them panting and exhausted with laughter, to cry out for mercy.

An amusing instance of this occurred once, when he met that Queen of Tragedy, Mrs Siddons, for the first time. She seemed determined to resist him, and preserve her tragic dignity; but after a vain struggle she yielded to the general infection, and flung herself back in her chair, in such a fearful paroxysm of laughter, and of such long continuance, that it made quite a scene, and all the company were alarmed.

He contrived to make the most commonplace subjects amusing, and carried everybody along with him, in his wildest flights of drollery. One evening, the subject of conversation was the meteorological turn of mind of the English. "What would become of us had it pleased Providence to make the weather unchangeable? Think of the state of destitution of the morning callers. Now, I will give you a specimen of their conversation: Mrs Jackson and Mrs Jones, two respectable ancient females, shall be calling upon Mrs Green, and Mrs Brown shall join their party, and return by moonlight; Mrs Brown shall catch cold and expire in the arms of

her friend, calling for peppermint water, and exclaiming, The moon! the moon!" And taking up his pen, partly from his comical delight in what he was doing, partly from the exquisite commonplaces he strung together, and the picture he drew of a morning visit in England, he kept us all in such roars of laughter, and laughed so heartily himself as he wrote, that we all went exhausted to bed. The very recollection of the scene, even at this distance of time, makes me laugh again as I write.

Another day he came home, with two hackney-coach loads of pictures, which he had met with at an auction; having found it impossible to resist so many yards of brown-looking figures and faded landscapes going "for absolutely nothing, unheard-of sacrifices." Kate hardly knew whether to laugh or to cry, when she saw these horribly dingy objects enter her pretty little drawing-room, and looked at him as if she thought him half mad. And half mad he was, but with delight at his purchase; he kept walking up and down the room, waving his arms, putting them in fresh lights, declaring they were exquisite specimens of art, and, if not by the very best masters, merited to be so. He invited all his friends, displayed the pictures at his suppers, insisted upon their being looked at and admired in every point of view, discovered fresh beauties for each new comer; and for three or four days, under the magic influence of his wit and imagination, these gloomy old paintings were a perpetual scource of amusement and fun.

At last, finding he was considered no authority in the fine arts, and that his pictures made no progress in public opinion, off they went, to my mother's great relief, as suddenly as they came, to another auction; but all first rechristened by himself, amidst his laughing friends with names never before heard of. One, I remember, was "a beautiful landscape, by Nicholas de Falda, a pupil of Valdeggio, the only painting by that eminent artist." The pictures sold, I believe, for rather less than he gave for them under their original names, which were probably as real as their assumed ones.

On another occasion he took it into his head to make a crusade against an unfortunate Mrs Dumplin, who was filled with the ambition of giving a rout. He found everybody going away from his house, and all to Mrs Dumplin's rout; upon which he reasoned, he laughed, he persuaded, he quizzed, he entreated, he painted and described in such glowing colours the horrors of a Dumplin rout—the heat, the crowd, the bad lemonade, the ignominy of appearing next day in the 'Morning Post,'—that at last, with one accord, all turned back, finding it impossible to leave him. He shouted victory, and Mrs Dumplin was heard of no more.

Yet in the midst of all this wild mirth and genuine enjoyment of youth and health, a pretty domestic trait occurs to my mind.

which, relating to such a man, then the idol of the London world, deserves to be told. One of his little children, then in delicate health, had for some time been in the habit of waking suddenly every evening; sobbing, anticipating the death of parents, and all the sorrows of life, almost before life had begun. He could not bear this unnatural union of childhood and sorrow, and for a long period, I have heard my mother say, each evening found him, at the waking of his child, with a toy, a picture-book, a bunch of grapes, or a joyous tale, mixed with a little strengthening advice and the tenderest caresses, until the habit was broken, and the child woke to joy and not to sorrow.

These are some of the little nothings which he had the art to turn into somethings, but which, I fear, resume their original insignificance under my pen; for I feel it impossible to give to them the life and raciness they had in reality, and which constituted their chief charm.

CHAPTER V.

Political Changes—Obtains Preferment—Goes to Sonning—Writes Peter Plymley—Its Effect—Makes the Acquaintance of Lord Stowell—Revisits Edinburgh—Goes to Howick—No House on the Living—Non-residence permitted—The Passing of the Residence Bill—Goes to see the Living—Difficulties—Returns to London—Publishes Sermons—Removes Family to Yorkshire—Tries to negotiate Exchange of Living—Difficulties of Exchange—Necessity of Building—Settles at Heslington.

IN 1806 those political changes took place which so unexpectedly, and for so short a period, brought the Whigs into power.

To one who, as he says, "had lived so long on the north side of the wall, this ray of sunshine was very cheering, and gave some hopes that he who had so well and so honestly fought the good fight, would now have some opportunity afforded him of exerting himself in his profession." But as he had no connexions and little political interest, I do not know that he would have derived any advantage from the change, had it not been for the indefatigable exertions of his friends at Holland House, who never rested until they saw justice done to him, and had obtained for him, from the Chancellor, Lord Erskine, the living of Foston-le-Clay, in Yorkshire.

For this he always felt that he owed Lord and Lady Holland a deep debt of gratitude; as, in addition to the immediate increase of his income, being a permanent provision, it gave him the first feeling of independence and security that he had enjoyed after a life of anxiety and uncertainty. An old friend of my father's wrote to me the other day:—"I was present at Bishopthorpe when your father first came down to be inducted to the living of Foston (now nearly fifty years ago), under the reign of old Archbishop Markham. I was then so young as to be placed at the side-table in that large dining-room; but I well remember the unwonted animation and the brilliant conversation that constantly attracted our attention to the great table, and which we were told proceeded from a young clergyman of the name of Sydney Smith, just come down to take possession of a living in Yorkshire. When he went away, the old Archbishop, I could see, though struck with his extraordinary abilities, did not half like, or understand, how one of the inferior clergy should be so much in possession of his faculties in the presence of his diocesan. On my return home the next day I found my family in a state of great excitement. They had just, they said, had a long visit from the most delightful person they had ever met,

a Mr S. Smith, who had brought letters of introduction from Lord Abinger, then Mr Scarlett, saying that the bearer was one of the most distinguished young men then in London, and congratulating my mother on the probability of having such a man established in her neighbourhood; a piece of good fortune which, when it did happen shortly after, she fully appreciated, and was not inclined to neglect. From this time we saw more and more of him; and although I have enjoyed now all that is best in life, I think if I were to select the day of my life that has left the most agreeable impression on my mind, it would be a long summer afternoon we all spent with your father at Heslington. We walked over with Lord —— and several of the lawyers of the Northern Circuit, and found a Mrs Hamilton in the house, who had just come from Edinburgh. The weather was lovely, everything looked bright, your father and Lord —— were in the highest spirits. The conversation turned on Edinburgh, the mode of life there, the remarkable men it contained or had produced; it was most brilliant and interesting—the first taste I had had of what I must still think the perfection of society. After dinner we all walked back by moonlight. I have never forgotten that day; I think it was one of the happiest of my life, and this has not been an unhappy one, as you know."

In the summer of 1807 he took his family for a short time to a little cottage in the village of Sonning, near Reading, to give them their first taste of the country; and even now I recollect with delight "each rural sight, each rural sound,"—the first breath of air, free from carpet-shakings, that we had inhaled.

I believe it was about this period that a letter from Peter Plymley to his brother Abraham, on the subject of the Irish Catholics, appeared suddenly in the London world. Its effect, I have been told, was like a spark on a heap of gunpowder. It was instantly dispersed all over London, was to be found on every table, spread in every direction over the country, and was the topic of general conversation and conjecture. It was quickly followed by another and another. Each fresh letter increased the eagerness and curiosity of the public. Every effort was made on the part of the Government to find out the author,—in vain: the secret was well kept. It is true, strong suspicion pointed toward the little village in which my father then resided, and a few of those best acquainted with his style felt convinced that there was but one man in England who could so write,—who could make the most irresistible wit and pleasantry the vehicle of sound and unanswerable argument; but no proof could be obtained. The editions were bought up as fast as they could be printed, and I am afraid from memory to state the numbers that were sold.

At the request of the Catholics, cheaper editions were printed,

for dispersion in Ireland. Few works, I have heard, ever did more to open men's minds to the absurdity and danger of the system then pursued by England;* and there are, or rather were, few Catholics who did not venerate the name of Sydney Smith, as one who, though an honest servant of another church, felt that the strongest tenet of that church was charity and mercy, and who, with this feeling, laboured incessantly to remove the heavy burdens and disqualifications then imposed on them by the laws. And let no man say that he laboured in vain; that the seeds he sowed have not brought forth fruit, though not all the fruit they would have produced had they been sown when they were offered.

All admit that much has still to be done, and much time must elapse before such sufferings can be forgotten. But look what Ireland was when my father first entered life, in the midst of the tumult and violence of the French Revolution, and look at what it has been of late; look at what he advised, and how he advised it; look at what has been done; and who will then say that the efforts of such a man were unavailing, that his honest labours were in vain, that he who from early youth to the hour of his death dedicated the fine talents God had given him to spread religious toleration, has not done good in his generation? I believe that his memory will live with the good men of every land, and that his best monument will be the love and respect of his countrymen.

Referring, some time after my father had left London for Yorkshire, to Peter Plymley, Lord Holland writes to him from Dropmore:—

"My dear Sydney,

"I wish you could have heard my conversation with Lord Grenville the other day, and the warm and enthusiastic way in which he spoke of Peter Plymley. I did not fail to remind him that the only author to whom we both thought it could be compared in English, lost a bishopric for his wittiest performance; and I hoped that, if we could discover the author, and had ever a bishopric in our gift, we should prove that Whigs were both more grateful and more liberal than the Tories.

"He rallied me upon the affectation of concealing who it was, but added that he hoped Peter would not always live in Yorkshire; for among other reasons, we felt the want of him just now in the state of the press, and that he wished to God Abraham would do something to provoke him to take up the pen again."

* Lord Holland, I see, bears witness to the powerful effect this work and the Edinburgh Review had on the Catholic question, in his Reminiscences of that period; and Lord Murray, in writing of it, says, "After Pascal's Letters it is the most instructive piece of wisdom in the form of irony ever written, and had the most important and lasting effects."

In the little village of Sonning my father first made the acquaintance of Sir William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell, then our nearest neighbour, whose society he found most agreeable. Although differing on almost every point of politics, he fully appreciated my father, and eagerly sought his acquaintance, not only then, but during the remainder of my father's life, whenever opportunity offered in London; and during the period of this intercourse he not unfrequently said, "Ah, Mr Smith, you would have been in a different situation, and a far richer man, if you would have belonged to us." This observation, from one so cautious, so sagacious, and so strong a politician as Lord Stowell, was, of course, gratifying to my father, as it showed that his powers and talents were felt and appreciated by his political opponents.

On his return to town, receiving an invitation, I believe from his friend Mr Sharp, to dine with him at Fishmongers' Hall, he sent the following playful answer, which, trifling as it is, as my tale is made up of trifles, I shall give.

"Much do I love, at civic treat,
The monsters of the deep to eat;
To see the rosy salmon lying,
By smelts encircled, born for frying;
And from the china boat to pour,
On flaky cod, the favour'd shower.
Thee, above all, I much regard,
Flatter than Longman's flattest bard,
Much honour'd turbot!—sore I grieve
Thee and thy dainty friends to leave.
Far from ye all, in snuggest corner,
I go to dine with little Horner:
He who, with philosophic eye,
Sat brooding o'er his Christmas pie:
Then, firm resolved, with either thumb
Tore forth the crust-enveloped plum,
And, mad with youthful dreams of future fame,
Proclaim'd the deathless glories of his name."

In the autumn of this year, 1808, he paid a short visit to his old haunts in Edinburgh, and on his return visited for the first time Lord Rosslyn and Lord Grey. He saw the latter (where he was ever best seen) in the midst of his family at Howick; and the foundation of that friendship was then laid, which was a constant source of pleasure and gratification to him in after-life, and ended only with his death.

As there was no house upon his living, and no means of procuring one in the neighbourhood, and the population of the parish was small, Dr Markham, the Archbishop of York, permitted his continued residence in town, on condition of his appointing an efficient curate. In 1808, however, the passing of the Residence

Bill by Mr Perceval,—a bill most just in its intentions, and most unjust in its effects,—compelled him to resign or build.

In consequence of the blamable negligence on the subject of residence of the clergy, which had existed for so long a period in the Church, one-third of the parsonage-houses in England had gone to decay. By the effects of this bill, one generation of clergymen were compelled suddenly to atone for the accumulated sins of their predecessors, and to benefit their successors, by building parsonage-houses out of their own private fortunes; unaided, save by a sum (I think two or three years' income of the living) which they were allowed to borrow from Queen Anne's Bounty. Of this sum they were to repay a portion every year, with interest upon the rest; and thus if they retained the living a few years, they were obliged to refund the whole sum, and it was utterly lost to them and their families.

On receiving the startling summons from the Archbishop, my father immediately went down into Yorkshire to learn his fate. He found that his living well deserved its name of Foston-le-Clay, consisting as it did of three hundred acres of glebe-land of the stiffest clay, in a remote village of Yorkshire. There had not been a resident clergyman for a hundred and fifty years, owing to the wretched state of the hovel which had once been the parsonage-house. This consisted of one brick-floored kitchen, with a room above it, which was in so dangerous a condition that the farmer, who had occupied it hitherto, declined living in it any longer; it opened on one side into a foal-yard, and on the other into the churchyard. There was no society in the village above the rank of a farmer. The parishioners were so unaccustomed to the sights of civilised life, that they could hardly recover from their surprise at the sight of a gentleman from London in a superfine coat and a four-wheeled carriage.

The prospect, it must be allowed, was not cheering, either morally or physically, for the country was as unpromising as the house. The clerk, the most important man in the village, was summoned,—a man who had numbered eighty years, looking, with his long gray hair, his threadbare coat, deep wrinkles, stooping gait, and crutch-stick, more ancient than the parsonage-house. He looked at my father for some time from under his gray shaggy eyebrows, and held a long conversation with him, in which the old clerk showed that age had not quenched the natural shrewdness of the Yorkshireman. At last, after a pause, he said, striking his crutch-stick on the ground, "Muster Smith, it often stroikes moy moind, that people as comes frae London is such *fools*. . . . . But you," he said (giving him a nudge with his stick), "I see you are no fool." Having thus gained the respect of the old, prejudiced

clerk, he endeavoured to prove himself no fool. He examined carefully and understood thoroughly all the difficulties of his position, namely, a house to be built without experience or money; a family and furniture to be moved into the heart of Yorkshire,—a process, in the year 1808, as difficult as a journey to the back settlements of America now to a man of small means: the absolute necessity of becoming a farmer, the living consisting of land and no tithe, there being no farm-buildings on it to enable him to let it; and the profound ignorance of all agricultural pursuits inevitable to a man who had passed life hitherto in towns, and whose time and attention had been divided between preaching, literature, and society. Add to these, the moral difficulty of breaking through all the habits of his life, and tearing himself from the many valuable friends he had by this time formed, and who delighted in his society. But he felt it a duty, both to his profession and family, that the effort should be made.

He returned immediately to London, and obtained the means of transporting his family and furniture, by the publication of two volumes of the sermons he had preached with so much success during his residence there. The means obtained, and the order of march arranged, he set about breaking up his little establishment in London, which was not effected without great opposition from his friends, and many kind attempts and schemes to detain him amongst them.

We all left town in the summer of 1809. He preceded the party, and hired for their reception a small but cheerful house in a village about two miles from York; from whence, not having been able to procure a house nearer, he proposed to do the duties of his living for the present, whilst he endeavoured, with the consent of Dr Vernon Harcourt (the present Archbishop of York), to negotiate an exchange of the living, and thus to avoid the necessity of building.

Lord Eldon required that a chancery living should only be exchanged for another chancery living, and that the parties so exchanging should be exactly of the same age. These conditions rendered exchange almost impossible; but to one with such slender means, it was worth any effort, to avoid the ruinous expense of building. He therefore exerted himself in every possible way, and began several negotiations, but they were all unsuccessful.

CHAPTER VI.

Establishment in Yorkshire—Habits—Mode of Life—Plans of Study—Attention to Children—Power of Abstraction—Farmers' Dinner—Medical Anecdotes—Experiments—Extracts from Diary—Practical Essays—Metaphysical Essays—Hints for History—Letter from Mr Macaulay—Sir Samuel Romilly's Visit—Sermon on his Death—Anecdote of Roasted Quaker—Dining out in the Country—Return of his Brother and Sir J. Mackintosh from India—Madame de Stael's visit to England—Typhus Fever—Lines on Mr Jeffrey.

OUR first establishment at Heslington was a great source of enjoyment to the younger part of the family, glad to escape from the confinement of London ; and our happiness contributed not a little to reconcile my father to the change.

He now began to arrange his mode of life and establishment He bought a little second-hand carriage, and a horse called Peter and the groom once exclaiming he had a "cruel face," he went ever after by the name of Peter the Cruel. In this little carriage he used to drive himself and my mother every Sunday, summer and winter (for she always accompanied him), to serve his church at Foston, and returned late in the evening.

At first it was not without fear that she entrusted herself to so inexperienced a coachman ; "but she soon," he said, "raised my wages, and considered me an excellent Jehu." The streets of York required some skill in this art. My father once exclaiming to one of the principal tradesmen there, "Why, Mr Brown, your streets are the narrowest in Europe ; there is not actually room for two carriages to pass." "Not room !" said the indignant Yorkist, "there 's plenty of room, Sir, and above an inch and a half to spare !" He used to dig vigorously an hour or two every day in his garden, "to avoid sudden death," as he said ; for he was even then inclined to *embonpoint*, and perhaps, as a young man, may have been considered somewhat clumsy in figure (though I never thought so), for I have often heard from my father that a college friend used to say, "Sydney, your sense, wit, and clumsiness, always give me the idea of an *Athenian carter*."

He spent much time in reading and composition, His activity was unceasing ; I hardly remember seeing him unoccupied, but when engaged in conversation. He never considered his education as finished ; he had always some object in hand to investigate.

He read with great rapidity. I think it was said of Johnson, "Look at Johnson, tearing out the bowels of his book." It might be said of my father, that he was running off with their contents; for he galloped through the pages so rapidly, that we often laughed at him when he shut up a thick quarto as his morning's work, and told him that he meant he had looked at it, not read it. "Cross-examine me, then," said he; and we generally found he knew all that was worth knowing in it; though I do not think he had a very retentive memory. The same peculiarity characterised his compositions: when he had any subject in hand, he was indefatigable in reading, searching, inquiring, seeking every source of information, and discussing it with any man of sense or cultivation who crossed his path. But having once mastered it, he would sit down, and he might be seen committing his ideas to paper with the same rapidity that they flowed out in his conversation,—no hesitation, no erasures, no stopping to consider and round his periods, no writing for effect, but a pouring out of the fulness of his mind and feelings, for he was heart and soul in whatever he undertook. One could see by his countenance how much he was interested or amused as fresh images came clustering round his pen. He hardly ever altered or corrected what he had written (as I find by many manuscripts I have of his); indeed, he was so impatient of this, that he could hardly bear the trouble of even looking it over, but would not unfrequently throw the manuscript down on the table as soon as finished, and say, starting up, "*There*, it is done; now, Kate, do look it over, and put in dots to the *i*'s and strokes to the *t*'s;"—and he would sally forth to his morning's walk.

He used frequently to lay out his plans of study for the year. The following have accidentally been preserved in one of his commonplace books, and I shall give them here, though not strictly belonging to this period:—

"*Plan of Study for* 1820.

"Translate every day ten lines of the 'De Officiis,' and re-translate into Latin. Five chapters of Greek Testament. Theological studies. Plato's 'Apology for Socrates;' Horace's Epodes, Epistles, Satires, and Ars Poetica.

"*Plan of Study for* 1821.

"Write sermons and reviews, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Read, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday. Write ten lines of Latin on writing days. Read five chapters of Greek Testament on reading days. For morning reading, either Polybius, or Diodorus Siculus, or some tracts of Xenophon or Plato; and for Latin, Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius.

"Monday: write, morning; read Tasso, evening. Tuesday:

Latin or Greek, morning; evening, theology. Wednesday, same as Monday. Friday, ditto. Thursday and Saturday, same as Tuesday. Read every day a chapter in Greek Testament, and translate ten lines of Latin. Good books to read:—Terrasson's 'History of Roman Jurisprudence;' Bishop of Chester's 'Records of the Creation.'"

My father was very fond of children, and liked to have them with him; indeed, in looking back, it often fills me with regret to think of the many advantages which ought to have been turned to better account, in passing a life with such a man. He took a lively interest in our pursuits and happiness (a happiness which, he often touchingly said, he had never known in childhood;) and never lost an opportunity of showing us whatever could instruct or amuse, that came within his reach. He loved to exercise our minds; and I remember, that often, in childhood, he gave my elder brother and myself subjects on which to write essays for him. He encouraged the ceaseless questions of childhood; he was never too busy to explain or assist; and as we grew older, he endeavoured to stimulate us to exertion by shame at ignorance. He loved to discuss with us, met us as his equals, and I look back with wonder at his patient refutation of our crude and foolish opinions.

As we grew up we became his companions; we were called in to all family councils, and his letters were common property. The tenderest mother could not have been more anxious and careful as to the religious tendency of the books we read, and he has often taken books out of my hands which I had ignorantly begun, with strict injunctions to consult him about my studies. He regarded it as the greatest of all evils to produce doubt or confusion in a youthful mind on such subjects; indeed he has said, in his sermons, that he "would a thousand times prefer that his child should die in the bloom of youth, rather than it should live to disbelieve."

After his evening walk he would sit down to his singular writing establishment, which I shall describe hereafter, placed by the servant always in the same place; and here, after looking through business papers and bills with as much plodding method as an attorney's clerk, he would suddenly push them all aside, and, as if to refresh his mind, take up his pen. His power of abstraction was so great that he would begin to compose, with as much rapidity and ease as another man would write a letter, those essays which are before the world, or some of those sermons of which my mother has given a few to the public since his death; often reading what he had written, listening to our criticisms (as Molière did to his old woman,) and this in the midst of all the conversations and interruptions of a family party, with talking or music going on.

"A clergyman complaining of want of society in the country, saying, 'they talk of *runts*' (young cows), Johnson expressed himself much flattered by the reply of Mrs Thrale's mother: 'Sir, Dr Johnson would learn to talk of *runts*;' meaning that I was a man that would make the most of my situation, whatever it was."* This was most strikingly the case with my father; he always endeavoured to see the bright side of things, and to adapt himself to the circumstances in which he was placed, however uncongenial to his former tastes and habits. He could talk of runts with those who talked only of runts; and he not only talked, but entered so eagerly into the subject before him, that he generally ended by finding sources of interest in them. In this respect he afforded a striking contrast to a brother clergyman, who, having been a popular preacher in London, received, about the same time, a valuable living in Yorkshire, and came down to a good house and a more populous neighbourhood than my father's. But alas! he could not talk of runts; he sighed after Piccadilly; his face grew thinner and longer every time we met. He used often to call, and lament over his hard fate, and wonder how my father could endure it with so much cheerfulness; and I believe he would have died of green fields and runts, if he had not succeeded in effecting an exchange, which restored him again to London.

Talking of runts reminds me of a practice my father established as soon as he was settled at Foston: he invited some of the most respectable farmers in his neighbourhood to dine with him once a year. On these occasions he did not make it a mere men's dinner, but the ladies of his family were always present; and, without lowering his own dignity or appearing to descend to the level of his more humble guests, it was interesting to observe how he drew out the real sense and knowledge they possessed, how he discussed their opinions, and with what tact he gave a tone of general interest to the conversation. Trifling as this was, it was evidently of great utility; it gave him more knowledge of them and influence amongst them that he could otherwise have obtained; each man went away better pleased with himself and less of a grumbler than he came, and, I suspect, with a greater value for character, which was the only passport to his table.

My father employed himself much in acquiring a knowledge of all rural arts and the details of farming, such as baking, brewing, fattening poultry, churning, &c.: talking much to the working people, whose shrewdness and blunt sense delighted him. He always acquired some information from them, often kindly taking up some old woman returning from market into his gig and learning her history. He said he never found anything well done in a small

* Boswell's Life of Johnson.

household, if the master and mistress were ignorant of the mode in which it ought to be done.

He began too on a small scale to exercise his skill in medicine, doing much good among his poor neighbours, although there were often ludicrous circumstances connected with his early medical career. On one occasion, wishing to administer a ball to Peter the Cruel, the groom by mistake, gave him two boxes of opium pills in his bran mash, which Peter composedly munched, boxes and all. My father, in dismay, when he heard what had happened, went to look, as he thought, for the last time on his beloved Peter; but soon found, to his great relief, that neither boxes nor pills had produced any visible effects. Another time he found all his pigs intoxicated, and, as he declared, "grunting God save the King about the stye," from having eaten some fermented grains which he had ordered for them. Once he administered castor-oil to the red cow, in quantities sufficient to have killed a regiment of Christians; but the red cow laughed alike at his skill and his oil, and went on her way rejoicing.

He never sat a moment after dinner when alone with his family, having contracted a horror of this practice from the long sittings inflicted on him in early life by his father; who, dining at three, used to sit till dark, and expect his family to do the same. My father rushed into the opposite extreme; and the cloth was scarcely removed ere he called for his hat and stick, and sallied forth for his evening stroll, in which we always accompanied him. Each cow, and calf, and horse, and pig, were in turn visited, and fed and patted, and all seemed to welcome him: he cared for their comforts as he cared for the comforts of every living being around him. He used to say, "I am all for cheap luxuries, even for animals. Now all animals have a passion for scratching their backbones; they break down your gates and palings to effect this. Look, there is my universal scratcher, a sharp-edged pole, resting on a high and low post, adapted to every height, from a horse to a lamb; even the Edinburgh Reviewer can take his turn. You have no idea how popular it is; I have not had a gate broken since I put it up. I have it in all my fields."

He always had some experiment going on. At one time he was bent on inventing a method of burning the fat of his own sheep, instead of candles; and numerous were the little tin lamps produced of various forms and sizes; great the illuminations, and greater the smells, the house being redolent of mutton-fat while this fancy lasted. Then he took smoky chimneys in hand, and invented patent iron backs, to throw out the heat of the fire by contracting the chimney, and facilitate sweeping them by the ease of removal; and I am bound in gratitude to own, with much success.

Immediately on coming to Foston, as early as the year 1809, he set on foot gardens for the poor; and subsequently, Dutch gardens for spade cultivation. The former were, I believe, among the first trials of an experiment which has been since so general adopted, as one of the most beneficial charities for a country population. He divided several acres of the glebe into sixteenths, and let them, at a low rent, to the villagers, to whom they were the greatest comfort. It became quite a pretty sight afterwards to see these small gardens (which were just enough to supply a cottager with potatoes, and sometimes enable him to keep a pig) filled at dawn with the women and children cultivating them before they went to their day's labour; and there was great emulation among them, whose garden should be most productive and obtain the prize.

Then the cheapest diet for the poor, and cooking for the poor, formed the subjects of his inquiry; and many a hungry labourer was brought in and stuffed with rice, or broth, or porridge, to test the relative effects of these kinds of food on the appetite. In short, it would be endless to enumerate the variety of subjects and objects which the activity and energy of his mind suggested and found interest in. Indeed, the last-mentioned subject had attracted his attention at a very early period; for I find, in a letter from Edinburgh, in 1799, he says:—"Read Count Rumford's Essays, and that in particular which treats of the food of the poor. The amazingly small expense at which they can be fed is really surprising. I have turned my mind lately to the verification of this essay, from the melancholy instance of a poor schoolmaster here, whom I found (as there are no Poor-laws in Scotland) starving to death, with his wife and four children. I extracted from him, in the course of conversation, that some time before, their distresses had been so great, that he had taken nothing but two little bits of tobacco from Sunday evening to Thursday, in the middle of the day. I asked him if there was no bread in the house during that time? Some small pieces of barley bread, he said, which he thought it sacrilege to touch,—they were for his family. He told his story with a shame and a reluctance which banished all doubt of his truth; or rather, would have banished all doubt, if the famine of his look, his simple, unaffected, and modest manner and countenance, had not done it before. He understands Latin, French, and Greek. I found him regaling, in the true Scriptural style, with a morsel of bread and a draught of water. He gets bread once in twenty-four hours, with which habit has taught him to be content. He believes in God, and says Providence never deserts him. He deserves a little broth, and Michael and myself have resolved to give him some."

In spite of this constant activity on his own part, in alluding to the nothings which form the occupations of a country life, he writes

to a lady :—"You are now seriously immersed in all those weighty operations which fill up the sum of country life. You are flinging barley out to the pigeons; you are hearing the piteous cluck of pea-fowls that have been eaten by foxes; you have drawn half a carnation; you have observed several times that the grass is green, and the May sweet; you have gaped several times, and pulled Cæsar by the ears, and heard about eight and thirty stories which —— and —— have to tell you about grandpapa and mamma, &c."

In an evening, often with a child on each knee, he would invent a tale for their amusement, composed of such ludicrous images and combinations as nobody else would have thought of, succeeding each other with the greatest rapidity. These were devoured by them with eyes and ears, in breathless interest: but at the most thrilling moment he always terminated with "and so they lived very happy ever after," a kiss on each fat cheek, "and now go to bed."

The following are extracts from such few portions of his diary as have been preserved, written at various times. These slight, unfinished fragments are not, of course, given as specimens of composition; but they are, I think, of great value, as indicating the occupation and direction of his thoughts, and the wholesome training of his mind, in his leisure hours, and in solitude, of which he seems to have felt the full value for the improvement of his character. In one of his letters to Jeffrey about this period, he says :—"Living a great deal alone (as I now do) will, I believe, correct me of my faults; for a man can do without his own approbation in much society, but he must make great exertions to gain it when he is alone; without it, I am convinced, solitude is not to be endured."

"*Maxims and Rules of Life.*

"Remember that every person, however low, has *rights* and *feelings*. In all contentions, let peace be rather your object, than triumph: value triumph only as the means of peace.

"Remember that your children, your wife, and your servants, have rights and feelings; treat them as you would treat persons who could turn again. Apply these doctrines to the administration of justice as a magistrate. Rank poisons make good medicines; error and misfortune may be turned into wisdom and improvement.

"Do not attempt to frighten children and inferiors by passion; it does more harm to your own character than it does good to them; the same thing is better done by firmness and persuasion.

"If you desire the common people to treat you as a gentle-

man, you must conduct yourself as a gentleman should do to them.

"When you meet with neglect, let it rouse you to exertion, instead of mortifying your pride. Set about lessening those defects which expose you to neglect, and improve those excellences which command attention and respect.

"Against general fears, remember how very precarious life is, take what care you will; how short it is, last as long as it ever does.

"Rise early in the morning, not only to avoid self-reproach, but to make the most of the little life that remains; not only to save the hours lost in sleep, but to avoid that langour which is spread over mind and body for the whole of that day in which you have lain late in bed.

"Passion gets less and less powerful after every defeat. Husband energy for the real demand which the dangers of life make upon it.

"Find fault, when you must find fault, in private, if possible; and some time after the offence, rather than at the time. The blamed are less inclined to resist, when they are blamed without witnesses; both parties are calmer, and the accused party is struck with the forbearance of the accuser, who has seen the fault, and watched for a private and proper time for mentioning it."

"My son writes me word he is unhappy at school. This makes me unhappy; but, Firstly, There is much unhappiness in human life: how can school be exempt? Secondly, Boys are apt to take a particular moment of depression for a general feeling, and they are in fact rarely unhappy; at the moment I write, perhaps he is playing about in the highest spirits. Thirdly, When he comes to state his grievance, it will probably have vanished, or be so trifling, that it will yield to argument or expostulation. Fourthly, At all events, if it is a real evil which makes him unhappy, I must find out what it is, and proceed to act upon it; but I must wait till I can, either in person or by letter, find out what it is."

"Jan. 19th. I passed very unhappily, from an unpleasant state of body produced by indolence.

"Feb. 15th. Lost two hours in bed from dawdling and doubting. Maxims to make one get up!—1st. *Optimum eligite, et consuetudo faciet jucundissimum.* 2nd. I must get up at last, it will be as difficult then as now. 3rd. By getting up I gain health, knowledge, temper, and animal spirits.

"May 31st. The difficulty of getting up, and I parley with the

fault; the only method is, to obey the rule instantly, and without a moment's reflection.

"Nov. 3rd. Lost a day by indolence; the only method is to spring up at once.

"I am uneasy about the sort of answer which the editor of the ——— has given to my letter; but as I cannot see his answer, the best way is to wait till I can see it; and after all, it is of very little consequence. Every man magnifies too much what belongs to himself; nobody does this more than I do.

"Another reason for benevolence is, that you forget your own joy from being so accustomed to it, but the joy of others seems something new.

"——— says, 'my best patients are the poor, for God is the paymaster.'

"*Death*—it must come some time or other. It has come to all, greater, better, wiser, than I.

"I have lived sixty-six years.

"I have done but very little harm in the world, and I have brought up my family.

"I was seized with sudden giddiness, so as to fall, and for twenty-two hours was affected by violent pain. I kept my bed that day, and was weak and languid for some days after. Mr Lyddon attributes it to indigestion. If this is the way nature punishes us for the consumption of indigestible food, I am sure it is worth while to be strictly temperate; I will therefore, in future, avoid soup and fish, and confine myself to one dish. I must not only attend to quantity, but quality. I may not be able to do this,—then I must die or be ill; but I am sure it is best wisdom to do it.

"Not only is religion calm and tranquil, but it has an extensive atmosphere round it, whose calmness and tranquillity must be preserved, if you would avoid misrepresentation.

"Not only study that those with whom you live should habitually respect you, but cultivate such manners as will secure the respect of persons with whom you occasionally converse. Keep up the habit of being respected, and do not attempt to be more amusing and agreeable than is consistent with the preservation of respect.

"I am come to the age of seventy; have attained enough reputation, to make me somebody: I should not like a vast reputation, it would plague me to death. I hope to care less for the outward world.

"Don't be too severe upon yourself and your own failings; keep on, don't faint, be energetic to the last.

"If you wish to keep mind clear and body healthy, abstain from all fermented liquors.

"Fight against sloth, and do all you can to make friends.

"If old age is even a state of suffering, it is a state of superior wisdom, in which man avoids all the rash and foolish things he does in his youth, and which make life dangerous and painful.

"Death must be distinguished from dying, with which it is often confounded.

"Reverence and stand in awe of yourself.

"How Nature delights and amuses us by varying even the character of insects: the ill-nature of the wasp, the sluggishness of the drone, the volatility of the butterfly, the slyness of the bug.

"Take short views, hope for the best, and trust in God."

"A FEW UNFINISHED SKETCHES.*

"*Of the Body.*

"Happiness is not impossible without health, but it is of very difficult attainment. I do not mean by health merely an absence of dangerous complaints, but that the body should be in perfect tune—full of vigour and alacrity.

"The longer I live, the more I am convinced that the apothecary is of more importance than Seneca; and that half the unhappiness in the world proceeds from little stoppages, from a duct choked up, from food pressing in the wrong place, from a vext duodenum, or an agitated pylorus.

"The deception, as practised upon human creatures, is curious and entertaining. My friend sups late; he eats some strong soup, then a lobster, then some tart, and he dilutes these esculent varieties with wine. The next day I call upon him. He is going to sell his house in London, and to retire into the country. He is alarmed for his eldest daughter's health. His expenses are hourly increasing, and nothing but a timely retreat can save him from ruin. All this is the lobster: and when over-excited nature has had time to manage this testaceous encumbrance, the daughter recovers, the finances are in good order, and every rural idea effectually excluded from the mind.

"In the same manner old friendships are destroyed by toasted cheese, and hard salted meat has led to suicide. Unpleasant feeling of the body produce correspondent sensations in the mind, and a great scene of wretchedness is sketched out by a morsel of indigestible and misguided food. Of such infinite consequence to happiness is it to study the body!

"I have nothing new to say upon the management which the body requires. The common rules are the best:—exercise without fatigue; generous living without excess; early rising, and mode-

* From his "Practical Essays."

ration in sleeping. These are the apothegms of old women; but if they are not attended to, happiness becomes so extremely difficult that very few persons can attain to it. In this point of view, the care of the body becomes a subject of elevation and importance. A walk in the fields, an hour's less sleep, may remove all those bodily vexations and disquietudes which are such formidable enemies to virtue; and may enable the mind to pursue its own resolves without that constant train of temptations to resist, and obstacles to overcome, which it always experiences from the bad organization of its companion. Johnson says, every man is a rascal when he is sick; meaning, I suppose, that he has no benevolent dispositions at that period towards his fellow-creatures, but that his notions assume a character of greater affinity to his bodily feelings, and that, *feeling* pain, he becomes malevolent; and if this be true of great diseases, it is true in a less degree of the smaller ailments of the body.

"Get up in a morning, walk before breakfast, pass four or five hours of the day in some active employment; then eat and drink over-night, lie in bed till one or two o'clock, saunter away the rest of the day in doing nothing!—can any two human beings be more perfectly dissimilar than the same individual under these two different systems of corporeal management? and is it not of as great importance towards happiness to pay a minute attention to the body, as it is to study the wisdom of Chrysippus and Crantor?"

"*Of Occupation.*

"A good stout bodily machine being provided, we must be actively occupied, or there can be little happiness.

"If a good useful occupation be *not* provided, it is so ungenial to the human mind to do nothing, that men occupy themselves *perilously*, as with gaming; or *frivolously*, as with walking up and down a street at a watering-place, and looking at the passers-by; or *malevolently*, as by teazing their wives and children. It is impossible to support, for any length of time, a state of perfect *ennui;* and if you were to shut a man up for any length of time within four walls, without occupation, he would go mad. If idleness do not produce vice or malevolence, it commonly produces melancholy.

"A stockbroker or a farmer have no leisure for imaginary wretchedness; their minds are usually hurried away by the necessity of noticing external objects, and they are guaranteed from that curse of idleness, the eternal disposition to think of themselves.

"If we have no necessary occupation, it becomes extremely difficult to make to ourselves occupations as entirely absorbing as those which necessity imposes.

"The profession which a man makes for himself is seldom more

than a half profession, and often leaves the mind in a state of vacancy and inoccupation. We must lash ourselves up however, as well as we can, to a notion of its great importance; and as the dispensing power is in our own hands, we must be very jealous of remission and of idleness.

"It may seem absurd that a gentleman who does not live by the profits of farming should rise at six o'clock in the morning to look after his farm; or, if botany be his object, that he should voyage to Iceland in pursuit of it. He is the happier, however, for his eagerness; his mind is more fully employed, and he is much more effectually guaranteed from all the miseries of *ennui*.

"It is asked, if the object *can* be of such great importance? Perhaps not; but the pursuit *is*. The fox, when caught, is worth nothing: he is followed for the pleasure of the following.

"What has a man to do with his life who has nothing which he *must* do? It is admitted he must find some employment, but does it signify what that employment is? Is he employed as much for his own happiness in cultivating a flower-garden as in philosophy, literature, or politics? This must depend upon the individual himself, and the circumstances in which he is placed. As far as the mere occupation or exclusion of *ennui* goes, this can be settled only by the feelings of the person employed; and if the attention be equally absorbed, in this point of view one occupation is as good as another; but a man who is conscious he was capable of doing great things, and has occupied himself with trifles beneath the level of his understanding, is apt to feel envy at the lot of those who have excelled him, and remorse at the misapplications of his own powers; he has not added to the pleasures of occupation the pleasures of benevolence, and so has not made his occupation as agreeable as he might have done, and he has probably not gained as much fame and wealth as he might have done if his pursuits had been of a higher nature. For these reasons it seems right that a man should attend to the highest pursuits in which he has any fair chance of excelling; he is as much occupied, gains more of what is worth gaining, and excludes remorse more effectually, even if he fail, because he is conscious of having made the effort.

"When a very clever man, or a very great man, takes to cultivating turnips and retiring, it is generally an imposture. The moment men cease to talk of their turnips, they are wretched and full of self-reproach. Let every man be *occupied*, and occupied in the highest employment of which his nature is capable, and die with the consciousness that *he has done his best!*"

"*Of Friendship.*

"Life is to be fortified by many friendships. To love, and to be

loved, is the greatest happiness of existence. If I lived under the burning sun of the equator, it would be a pleasure to me to think that there were many human beings on the other side of the world who regarded and respected me; I could and would not live if I were alone upon the earth, and cut off from the remembrance of my fellow-creatures. It is not that a man has occasion often to fall back upon the kindness of his friends; perhaps he may never experience the necessity of doing so; but we are governed by our imaginations, and they stand there as a solid and impregnable bulwark against all the evils of life.

"Friendships should be formed with persons of all ages and conditions, and with both sexes. I have a friend who is a bookseller, to whom I have been very civil, and who would do anything to serve me; and I have two or three small friendships among persons in much humbler walks of life, who, I verily believe, would do me a considerable kindness according to their means. It is a great happiness to form a sincere friendship with a woman; but a friendship among persons of different sexes rarely or ever takes place in this country. The austerity of our manners hardly admits of such a connection;—compatible with the most perfect innocence, and a source of the highest possible delight to those who are fortunate enough to form it.

"Very few friends will bear to be told of their faults; and if done at all, it must be done with infinite management and delicacy; for if you indulge often in this practice, men think you hate, and avoid you. If the evil is not very alarming, it is better indeed to let it alone, and not to turn friendship into a system of lawful and unpunishable impertinence. I am for frank explanations with friends in cases of affronts. They sometimes save a perishing friendship, and even place it on a firmer basis than at first; but secret discontent must always end badly."

"*Of Cheerfulness.*

"Cheerfulness and good spirits depend in a great degree upon bodily causes, but much may be done for the promotion of this turn of mind. Persons subject to low spirits should make the rooms in which they live as cheerful as possible; taking care that the paper with which the wall is covered should be of a brilliant, lively colour, hanging up pictures or prints, and covering the chimney-piece with beautiful china. A bay-window looking upon pleasant objects, and, above all, a large fire whenever the weather will permit, are favourable to good spirits, and the tables near should be strewed with books and pamphlets. To this must be added as much eating and drinking as is consistent with health; and some manual employment for men,—as gardening, a carpenter's shop, the turn-

ing-lathe, &c. Women have always manual employment enough, and it is a great source of cheerfulness. Fresh air, exercise, occupation, society, and travelling, are powerful remedies.

"Melancholy commonly flies to the future for its aliment, and must be encountered in this sort of artifice, by diminishing the range of our views. I have a large family coming on, my income is diminishing, and I shall fall into pecuniary difficulties. Well! but you are not *now* in pecuniary difficulties. Your eldest child is only seven years old; it must be two or three years before your family make any additional demands upon your purse. Wait till the time comes. Much may happen in the interval to better your situation; and if nothing does happen, at least enjoy the two or three years of ease and uninterruption which are before you. You are uneasy about your eldest son in India; but it is now June, and at the earliest the fleet will not come in till September; it may bring accounts of his health and prosperity, but at all events there are eight or nine weeks before you can hear news. Why are they to be spent as if you had heard the worst? The habit of taking very short views of human life may be acquired by degrees, and a great sum of happiness is gained by it. It becomes as customary at last to view things on the good side of the question as it was before to despond, and to extract misery from every passing event.

"A firm confidence in an overruling Providence,—a remembrance of the shortness of human life, that it will soon be over and finished,—that we scarcely know, unless we could trace the remote consequences of every event, what would be good and what an evil;—these are very important topics in that melancholy which proceeds from grief.

"It is wise to state to friends that our spirits are low, to state the cause of the depression, and to hear all that argument or ridicule can suggest for the cure. Melancholy is always the worse for concealment, and many causes of depression are so frivolous, that we are shamed out of them by the mere statement of their existence."

Scattered amongst his papers are a few fragments on metaphysical subjects, which always interested him.

"*Benevolence.*

"A child is born with the power of feeling bodily pleasure and pain. The milk he receives from his nurse delights him. The appearance of the nurse is always connected with that pleasure, and, by the laws of association, because he loves the milk he at last comes to love the nurse—that is, her presence excites in him the passion of joy. In the same manner, if his nurse, instead of suckling him, had rubbed his mouth with wormwood, the pain of the

wormwood would be united with the appearance of the nurse; and because the taste of the wormwood excited in him the passion of sorrow, the appearance of the nurse would at last do the same. In this way we begin to connect our fellow-creatures with our pleasures and pains.

"But whence comes it that a child travels from joy to benevolence, and wishes to do good to the person who excites in him pleasurable sensations? Why is he not benevolent towards the pap-boat, or the nurse's gown, or any other inanimate object which his eye connects as frequently with his animal pleasures as the image of his nurse? The progress from joy to benevolence is, I believe, entirely the result of experience, and the latter is a passion of much later growth than the other. As a child grows older, he perceives that the person who ministers to his joy and sorrow has similar feelings with himself, and that it becomes his *interest* to attend to them. If he scratches, and kicks, and cries, and knocks down glasses and tea-cups, he is shaken or scolded, or sugar is refused; or he is put in the corner, or whipped. If he pleases his superior, come cakes, plums, toys, and amusing games.

"In the same manner, at school, he is every day receiving lessons of the evils of malevolence and the advantages of benevolence. Kicks, cuffs, privations, solitude, deter him on one hand; cheerful society, protection, community of joys, allure him on the other. In this way he learns the important lesson of doing good in order to promote his own good; and having loved the passion for its utility, he loves it at *last* for himself. In after-life, the poet, the orator, the moralist, and the preacher, praise and purify this fine passion, give it strength, which conceals its origin, and makes it appear primary and original.

"In order to make this more clear, let us suppose that a child was treated, to a late period, with the same uniform indulgence, however numerous his faults, and however untoward his disposition; that nurse, father, mother, school-fellow, and schoolmaster, all studied his humours and ministered to his wants, without exacting from him in return the slightest attention to their own feelings. What motive could such a child have for benevolence? How would he learn to become benevolent? Why should he cultivate such passive human beings, more than the spoon, or the silver mug, which, tossed and tumbled about by his caprice to-day, are sure to appear at the dinner of to-morrow?

"In fact, such a blind submission to the will of any child would infallibly make him a tyrant, and extinguish in his mind every spark of benevolence: but if an exemption from the necessity of attending to the feelings of our fellow-creatures, destroys benevolence, the necessity of doing so may be presumed to teach it.

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Where one fact, admitted to be true, will explain other facts equally admitted to be true, there is no occasion to suppose other facts which are doubtful, in order to make a new series of causes and consequences. That children are born capable of feeling bodily pain and pleasure, is not disputed; that they soon learn to be benevolent towards, or to love their fellow-creatures, is an equally admitted fact. If one of these facts can be shown to be the cause of the other, there is no occasion to have recourse to a principle of benevolence as an original principle of our nature; but this, though a curious, is not a very important question. Whether innate, or early learnt, the most pure and disinterested benevolence exists in human nature. Howard visited prisons and lazarettos, and sacrificed his life for his fellow-creatures, let the metaphysical origin of benevolence be what it may.

"The passion of benevolence, thus excited in our nature, receives the name of gratitude, when we desire to do good to those who have done good to us. From apparent gratitude, is to be deducted the hope of future favour from the object of our gratitude, and the dread of infamy for being ungrateful. The pure passion may be explained from the united effects of association and education. Sexual love is that benevolence to persons of the opposite sex, which proceeds from the beauty of their countenance or their form.

"Paternal love is the benevolence which a father feels towards his child. This passion, like all others which are of use to mankind, is very much increased by education and general opinion, by reason and reflection, and by compassion, by habit, and association. I see no occasion for supposing the existence of any original principle of paternal love. The analogy from animals is entirely against it. Love, when applied to persons of the same sex, affection, and kindness, are all modifications of the same passions of joy, or benevolence; an agreeable, charming, or delightful person excites these passions in us, in different degrees, gives us feelings of joy, or makes us desirous of doing him some good. When benevolence excites us to give, it is called generosity. Hope is the belief, more or less strong, that joy will come; desire is the wish it may come. There is no word to designate the remembrance of joys past."

"*Of the Mind.* (*A Fragment.*)

"The mind is inhabited by ideas, by passions, and by desires. Passions are strong feelings or affections of the mind, not leading immediately to action. Desires are strong feelings of the mind, accompanied by a wish to act.

"In revenge, I can perceive that my mind is powerfully affected,

and I have a wish to act, and to give pain to some person: this is a desire. When the possession of sudden wealth is announced to me, I feel transported with joy, but I have no immediate desire to act; here I only recognize the affection of my mind.

"In avarice, there is the feeling and the wish to act,—this is a desire. In grief there is only the affection or perturbation of the mind,—this is a passion. Every desire is a passion: every passion is not a desire. Emotion is another name for passion.

"The mind is of course the seat of all pain and pleasure. The pain of the gout is not in my toe, but in my mind, and I refer it to the toe as the cause. If this were otherwise, I should have ten minds instead of one, and as many on my hands.

"The pains and pleasures of the body ought to be classed among the passions. They are passions to all intents and purposes. The pains of the body have all some affinity to each other, and in consequence of that affinity have received the common name of pain. They are not degrees of the same feeling, but are different feelings, though with some general resemblance. It is an abuse of terms to call the pain excited by gout, by a cut, by a contusion, and by the stomach-ache, degrees of the same feeling. In the same manner, the pleasures arising from sweetness, smoothness, or from savoury tastes, appear to be distinct feelings, with some common relation between them, and therefore denominated pleasures.

"What is true of pain and of pleasure referred to the body, and in popular estimation *supposed* to exist *in* the body, is true also of the pains and pleasures of the mind.

"Grief, hatred, and revenge, are not degrees of the same painful feeling, but distinct feelings. So are hope, joy, and benevolence; but all the agreeable passions have some resemblance to each other, so have all the disagreeable passions."

I find among his papers various hints for history, such as the following, many of which are very characteristic.

"In 1758, the Chevalier Barras was burnt to death at Amiens for singing a blasphemous song. Thirty-five years afterwards the Christian religion was abolished all over France, and the church property confiscated.

"Blackstone says that for the Bull *Unigenitus* alone fifty-four thousand *lettres de cachet* were issued. Seventy thousand persons executed in the reign of Henry VIII. (*See* BRODIE, vol. i.)

"In 1782, Louis XVI., exercising the right of issuing *lettres de cachet*, and in possession of full and unrestrained power; ten years after, his head was cut off.

"In 1770, the English Legislature taxed the American colonies, and made laws for them; in twelve years afterwards the colonies were declared an independent State.

"In 1797, Ireland petitioned the English Parliament for some small indulgence to their commerce: the petition was unanimously ignored: in eight years afterwards, Ireland was unanimously declared by the same Parliament to be a separate and independent kingdom.

"In America there is no waste of public money; all public matters are conducted with exemplary frugality. On days of ceremony, two constables walk before the President, and he sits down to a joint of meat and a pudding provided at the expense of twenty-two republics.

"The religious mistakes of mankind have been, that there are spirits mingling with mankind, hence *demons, witchcraft;* that God governs the world by present judgments, hence *ordeals;* that there is a connection between the fate of particular men and the heavenly bodies at the time of their birth, hence *astrology;* that God is to be worshipped by the misery and privations of the worshippers, hence *monasteries and flagellations.*

"*Account of Taxes from William the Conqueror.*

1066	£200,000	1566	£1,500,000
1266	150,000	1666	1,800,000
1366	130,000	1766	17,000,000
1466	100,000		

"Four years after the Scotch Union, Lord F—— moved its repeal in the House of Lords, 54 against 54; four proxies carried it against the motion.

"Fleury became minister at seventy-three years of age.

"Galileo was made to promise, on his knees, never to teach again the motion of the Earth and the Sun; as a part of his punishment, he was directed to write every week the seven Penitential Psalms.

"The infamous Judge Jeffreys would not give up his Protestantism, and lost the favour of James II.

"At the Revolution, the debt was a million, the revenue two, *i.e.*, we owed half a year's income—at present about sixteen years' income.

"Brahmins may eat beef, if killed for sacrifice,—and there are sacrifices every day.

"The Excise and Post Office began under the Commonwealth. Court of Wards abolished in the Commonwealth.

"Colbert never taxed imports as high as ten per cent. *ad valorem;* he had no prohibition.

"The Scotch members used to receive ten guineas per week, secret service money.

"Sir John Trevor, Speaker of the Lower House, was convicted of receiving a bribe of a thousand pounds from the City of London between 1700 and 1716."

Amongst his manuscripts is a sketch he wrote at a later period, giving an account of English misrule in Ireland from the earliest period of our possession up to the present day, compiled from the best existing documents, and forming so fearful a picture that he hesitated to give it to the world when done. After his death, my mother, thinking that the time had perhaps arrived when it might be published, referred to a gentleman whom she justly felt to be one of the highest historical authorities of our day, and received from Mr Macaulay the following answer :—

"1847.

"Dear Mrs Sydney Smith,

"I am truly grateful to you for suffering me to see the sketch of Irish history, drawn up by my admirable and excellent friend. I perfectly understand the generous feeling with which it was written, and I also think that I see why it was never published. While the Catholic disabilities lasted, he whom we regret did all that he could to awaken the conscience of the oppressors and to find excuses for the faults of the oppressed. When these disabilities had been removed, and when designing men still attempted to inflame the Irish against England, by repeating tales of grievances which had passed away, he felt that this work would no longer do any good, and that it might be used by demagogues in such a way as to do positive harm. You will see, from what I have said, that though I think this piece honourable to his memory, I do not wish to see it published, nor do I think that, though it would raise the reputation of almost any other writer of our time, it would raise his ; in truth, nothing that is not of very rare and striking merit ought now to be given to the world under his name. He is universally admitted to have been a great reasoner, and the greatest master of ridicule that has appeared among us since Swift. * Many things, therefore, which,

* I find my father here, and indeed in almost every sketch of him, compared to Swift in the character of his writings. It is for others to decide upon the justness of the comparison ; but there is one difference I ought, and I am proud to point out, that there is not a single line in them that might not be placed before the purity of youth, or that is unfit for the eye of a woman ; that he has exercised his powers of wit and sarcasm to the utmost, without ever sullying his pages with impurities, or degrading his talents and profession by irreligion ; and this, I believe, can in very few instances be asserted of any other eminently humorous writer, either French or English, who have used such powers to any great extent. Lord John Russell, in writing to me of my father, says on this subject :—"Too much indulgence has been shown to the extravagance, dishonesty, and domestic infidelity of men of wit, as if the 'light that led astray was light from heaven.' It is not light from heaven, but flashes from a volcano which has its seat in hell."

if they came from an inferior author, would be read with pleasure, will produce disappointment if published as works of Mr Sydney Smith. I return the papers with most sincere thanks. Believe me ever, dear Mrs Sydney Smith, yours very truly,

'T. B. MACAULAY."

My father had not long been established in his house at Heslington before several of his old friends found him out; among the first of these were Mr Horner, Mr Murray, and Mr Adams. In August Mr Abercromby and his family spent a few days with him, which gave him much pleasure; and he had also a visit from Lord Webb Seymour, one of the friends with whom he had lived most intimately at Edinburgh, and whose early death was a source of deep regret to him. To the latter be dedicated a small volume of sermons which he had preached during his residence there, in the following words:—"My Lord,—I dedicate these few sermons to you as a slight token of my great regard and respect; because I know no man who, in spite of the disadvantages of high birth, lives to more honourable and commendable purposes than yourself."

When my father settled in the country, he formed the resolution never to shoot; "first," he says, "because I found, on trying at Lord Grey's that the birds seemed to consider the muzzle of my gun as their safest position; secondly, because I never could help shutting my eyes when I fired my gun, so was not likely to improve; and thirdly, because, if you do shoot, the squire and the poacher both consider you as their natural enemy, and I thought it more clerical to be at peace with both."

In 1810 my father had the pleasure of receiving his old and valued friend, Sir Samuel Romilly, and his family; and so deep was his veneration for the unbending virtue of this great man, that the meeting was one not easily forgotten. No two men were ever more unlike, or pursued the same ends by such different paths; yet they had many feelings in common, and a total absence of all those littlenesses which sometimes obscure and alienate even great men. I remember Sir Samuel went with my father to see Castle Howard, at which he gazed with great admiration, and after a long pause, standing on the steps of the portico and looking towards the mausoleum and at the lovely landscape around, he exclaimed, spreading out his arms, "These are indeed things that must make death terrible!"

Some years after, my father introduced the following passage, on the recent death of Sir Samuel Romilly, into a sermon on the subject of Meditation on Death. As it has not been published, I shall insert it here, as a proof of his feelings towards that eminent man:—

"And let me ask you, my brethern, we who see the good and great daily perishing before our eyes, what comfort have we but this hope in Christ that we shall meet again? Remember the eminent men who, within the few years last past, have paid the great debt of nature. The earth stripped of its moral grandeur, sunk in its spiritual pride. The melancholy wreck of talents and of wisdom gone, my brethren, when we feel how dear, how valuable they were to us, when we would have asked of God on our bended knees their preservation and their life. Can we live with all that is excellent in human nature, can we study it, can we contemplate it, and then lose it and never hope to see it again?

"Can we say of any human being, as we may say of that great man who was torn from us in the beginning of this winter, that he acted with vast capacity upon all the great calamities of life; that he came with unblemished purity to restrain iniquity; that, condemning injustice, he was just; that, restraining corruption, he was pure; that those who were provoked to look into the life of a great statesman, found him a good man also, and acknowledged he was sincere even when they did not believe he was right? Can we say of such a man, with all the career of worldly ambition before him, that he was the friend of the wretched and the poor; that in the midst of vast occupation he remembered the debtor's cell, the prisoner's dungeon, the last hour of the law's victim; that he meditated day and night on wretchedness, weakness, and want? Can we say all this of any human being, and then have him no more in remembrance? When you 'die daily,' my brethren; when you remember my text, paint to yourselves the gathering together again of the good and the just.

"Remember that God is to be worshipped, that death is to be met by such a life as this; remember, in the last hour, that rank, that birth, that wealth, that all earthly things will vanish away, that you will then think only of the wretchedness you have lessened and the good you have done."

I see, by letters in my possession, that on the publication of Sir Samuel Romilly's Life by his sons, my father's letter of warm admiration was the first received by the family; and the terms in which they speak of the value of my father's praise is highly gratifying to those who love his memory.

My father had by this time made a considerable acquaintance in and round York. Dining out on one occasion, he happened to meet Mr ——, whom he always met with pleasure, as he was a man of sense, simplicity, and learning; but with such a total absence, not only of humour in himself, but of perception of it in others, as made him an amusing subject of speculation to my father.

The conversation at dinner took a liberal turn. My father, in the full career of his spirits, happened to say, "Though he was not generally considered an illiberal man, yet he must confess he had one little weakness, one secret wish,—he should like to *roast a Quaker.*" "Good heavens, Mr Smith!" said Mr ——, full of horror, "roast a Quaker?" "Yes, Sir" (with the greatest gravity), "roast a Quaker!" "But do you consider, Mr Smith, the torture?" "Yes, Sir," said my father, "I have considered everything. It may be wrong, as you say: the Quaker would undoubtedly suffer acutely, but every one has his tastes—mine would be to roast a Quaker: one would satisfy me, only one. It is one of those peculiarities I have striven against in vain, and I hope you will pardon my weakness."

Mr ——'s honest simplicity could stand this no longer, and he seemed hardly able to sit at table with him. The whole company were in roars of laughter at the scene: but neither this, nor the mirth and mischief sparkling in my father's eye, enlightened him in the least, for a joke was a thing of which he had no conception. At last my father, seeing that he was giving real pain, said, "Come, come, Mr ——, since you think this so very illiberal, I must be wrong; and will give up my roasted Quaker rather than your esteem; let us drink wine together." Peace was made, but I believe neither time nor explanation would have ever made him comprehend it was a joke.

Though it was the general habit in Yorkshire to make visits of two or three days at the houses in the neighbourhood, yet not unfrequently invitations to dinner only came, and sometimes to a house at a considerable distance.

"Did you ever dine out in the country?" said my father. "What misery human beings inflict on each other under the name of pleasure! We went to dine last Thursday with Mr ——, a neighbouring clergyman, a haunch of venison being the stimulus to the invitation. We set out at five o'clock; drove in a broiling sun, on dusty roads, three miles, in our best gowns; found Squire and parsons assembled in a small hot room, the whole house redolent of frying; talked, as is our wont, of roads, weather, and turnips; that done, began to grow hungry, then serious, then impatient. At last a stripling, evidently caught up for the occasion, opened the door and beckoned our host out of the room. After some moments of awful suspense, he returned to us with a face of much distress, saying, 'the woman assisting in the kitchen had mistaken the soup for dirty water, and had thrown it away, so we must do without it;' we all agreed it was perhaps as well we should, under the circumstances. At last, to our joy, dinner was announced; but oh, ye gods! as we entered the dining-room what a gale met

our nose! the venison was high; the venison was uneatable, and was obliged to follow the soup with all speed.

"Dinner proceeded, but our spirits flagged under these accumulated misfortunes. There was an ominous pause between the first and second course; we looked each other in the face—what new disaster awaited us? The pause became fearful. At last the door burst open, and the boy rushed in, calling out aloud, 'Please, Sir, has Betty any right to leather I?' What human gravity could stand this? We roared with laughter; all took part against Betty, obtained the second course with some difficulty, bored each other the usual time, ordered our carriages, expecting our post-boys to be drunk, and were grateful to Providence for not permitting them to deposit us in a wet ditch. So much for dinners in the country!"

This winter he received another visit from his friend Jeffrey, who came with an American gentleman, Mr Simond, and his niece, Miss Wilkes. We little suspected then that this lady, great-niece to the agitator Wilkes, was so soon after to become Mrs Jeffrey. We had visits also from Mr Horner, Mr Murray, and Lord Lauderdale. My father used to say of Mr Horner that he had the Ten Commandments written on his face; in fact, that he looked so virtuous, that he might commit any crime, and no one would believe in the possibility of his guilt.

It was, I believe, in 1812 that my father's eldest brother, Robert, who had gone out to India as Advocate-General of Bengal, eight years before, returned with his wife and family to this country;—a return we had all been eagerly looking forward to. Before leaving India, my uncle had with great generosity offered to remain there another year, and to bestow the proceeds of his office upon my father: but the latter, poor as he was, fearing the effects of the climate, and knowing his brother's ardent desire to return to England, with equal generosity refused, without a moment's hesitation, to accept such a sacrifice. We went to their house in town to meet them, and spent some weeks there.

My father was received with open arms by all his old friends in London; and the pleasure and interest of this visit to his old haunts were much enhanced by the arrival of his friend Sir James Mackintosh likewise from India, after an absence from England of about the same time. He arrived on the eve of a general election, and during the excitement of political changes consequent upon the murder of Mr Perceval, and the attempt to form a ministry under Lord Wellesley. In the summer Sir James went with Lady Mackintosh to the Highlands, and on their return spent some days with my father at Heslington.

In the autumn of the following year, Madame de Staël, driven from Copet by the persecutions of Napoleon, took refuge in Eng-

land, and was an object of general interest and attention. She was constantly in the society of Sir James Mackintosh; and having heard much of my father, and of his powers of conversation and argument, she was eager to make his acquaintance, and try her eloquence upon him. She used frequently to say to Sir James, with the odd jumble she made of English titles and names, "Mais, votre ami Sydney Smith, ce Prêtre-Amiral, pourquoi ne vient-il pas?"

The Prêtre-Amiral was unable to leave his parish during her visit here, so they never met. Some years after, at Nice, she made the acquaintance of his elder brother Robert, whose wonderful powers of argument and exquisite French she revelled in through a whole winter; though often defeated by him in discussions, to the delight of all the English staying there, whom she had bullied terribly before his arrival, and who looked up to him as a sort of champion. "Ah! pourquoi ne parlez-vous pas comme ça dans la Chambre des Communes?" said Madame de Staël to him one day, after listening for some time to the eloquent flow of his language. Mr Canning used to say, "Bobus's language is the essence of English." Sir James Mackintosh, speaking of him in India, says, "I hear frequently of Bobus; his name amongst the natives is greater than that of any pundit since the days of Menu."

The following year my uncle came down with his family to visit us in Yorkshire, and remained with us a month. On his return to Northampton a typhus fever attacked, with most fearful and fatal results, first his family, then the nurse, and lastly himself. My aunt, in communicating these dreadful tidings, entreated my father to come to their aid; and, after taking medical advice as to the best precautions against infection, he set off, without a moment's hesitation, and in spite of my mother's earnest entreaties.

An intimate friend, who was staying with us at the time, and was present at this scene, tells me, "Nothing in my long knowledge of him ever gave me a higher idea of your father's generosity of character and firmness of principle than this act; for, in addition to his knowledge how dependent you all were upon him, and that your mother was near her confinement, he went, not ignorant of, or despising, the danger, but with his eyes open to it, fearing it very much, and fully believing he was going to meet death. But in spite of his own fears and your poor mother's efforts, he resisted, and said, 'If any evil were to happen to Bobus, I should reproach myself all my life; but,' added he, 'Kate, mind, if I do die, you must always keep the day of my death.'"

My father remained with my uncle some weeks, until he had the satisfaction of leaving him convalescent, and comfortably established in a house near Northampton, under the care of the most eminent

physician there, the late Dr Carr, uncle to Lady Davy. He returned in safety to my poor mother, whose anxiety during this period may easily be imagined.

Amongst our rural delights at Heslington was the possession of a young donkey, which had been given up to our tender mercies from its birth, and in whose education we employed a large portion of our spare time; and a most accomplished donkey it became under our tuition. It would walk up-stairs, pick pockets, follow us in our walks like a huge Newfoundland dog, and at the most distant sight of us in the field, with ears down and tail erect, would set off in full bray to meet us. These demonstrations on Bitty's part were met with not less affection on ours, and Bitty was almost considered a member of the family.

One day, when my elder brother and myself were training our beloved Bitty, with a pocket-handkerchief for a bridle, and his head crowned with flowers, to run round our garden, who should arrive in the midst of our sport but Mr Jeffrey. Finding that my father was out, he, with his usual kindness towards young people, immediately joined in our sport, and, to our infinite delight, mounted our donkey. He was proceeding in triumph, amidst our shouts of laughter, when my father and mother, in company, I believe, with Mr Horner and Mr Murray, returned from their walk, and beheld this scene from the garden door. Though years and years have passed away, I still remember the joy-inspiring laughter that burst from my father at this unexpected sight, as advancing towards his old friend, with a face beaming with delight and with extended arms, he broke forth in the following impromptu:—

"Witty as Horatius Flaccus,
As great a Jacobin as Gracchus,
Short, though not as fat, as Bacchus,
Riding on a little jackass."

These lines were afterwards repeated by some one to Mr —— at Holland House, just before he was introduced for the first time to Mr Jeffrey; and they caught his fancy to such a degree, that he could not get them out of his head, but kept repeating them in a low voice all the time Mr Jeffrey was conversing with him.

I must end Bitty's history, as he has been introduced, by saying that he followed us to Foston, served us faithfully for thirteen years, and, on our leaving Yorkshire, was permitted by our kind friend Lord Carlisle to spend the rest of his days in idleness and plenty, in his beautiful park, with an unbounded command of thistles.

My father meanwhile had entered into negotiations with various clergymen to effect an exchange of livings, but the conditions im-

posed by Lord Eldon had hitherto prevented them from being brought to a successful conclusion. He continued, therefore, to drive over every week to do duty at his living.

One Sunday (to show the very primitive state of the villagers), just as he was about to enter the church, the clerk, the sexton, the churchwardens, and the principal farmers came rushing after him exclaiming with agitated countenances, "Please your honour, a coach! a coach!" My father, with a calmness that filled them with wonder, said, "Well, well, my good friends, stand firm, never mind; even though there should be a coach, it will do us no harm, let us see." And certainly a carriage was seen approaching, such as rarely appeared in those parts; and as it advanced rapidly towards the little miserable hovel which had once been the parsonage-house, it was discovered to contain a very fashionable lady. The lady turned out to be Mrs Aprecce, on her way from Scotland, bringing letters of introduction to my father, whom she was anxious to hear preach; and this was the beginning of an acquaintance which afterwards ripened into intimacy, and several of the most amusing of his letters are addressed to her, under her more celebrated name of Lady Davy. She and Sir Humphry in after-times not unfrequently put up at the Rector's Head, as my father used to call his house; and certainly no landlord could rejoice more in "a run on the road," or more cordially welcome the sight of an old friend.

CHAPTER VII.

Builds House—Removes to Foston—Visit of Sir James Mackintosh—Becomes a Magistrate—Visit to Newgate with Mrs Fry, and Sermon—Visit to Sir G. Philips—Forms the Acquaintance of the Earl of Carlisle—Death of only Sister—Last Visit from Mr Horner—Bad Harvest, and Fever—Exertions amongst the Poor—Visit from Lord and Lady Holland—Leaves off Riding—Callamity—Shopping—Sends Son to School—Visits Lord Grey—Visit from Dr Marcet—Conversation—Bunch—Inscription for Duke of Bedford's Statue—Anecdote of Lord ——'s Son—Assizes—Hunt's Trial—Death of Grattan.

THUS cheered by occasional visits of his friends, turning his back upon London and former habits, he contrived by the aid of books and of the various new duties and interests he had created for himself, to pass three years not unpleasantly nor unprofitably. Not having succeeded in exchanging his living, he, according to his promise to the archbishop, set vigorously to work to build his house; and accomplished it in nine months after laying the first stone. But he shall here tell his own tale, as I have heard it at various times in detached portions.

"A diner-out, a wit, and a popular preacher, I was suddenly caught up by the Archbishop of York, and transported to my living in Yorkshire, where there had not been a resident clergyman for a hundred and fifty years. Fresh from London, not knowing a turnip from a carrot, I was compelled to farm three hundred acres, and without capital to build a parsonage-house.

"I asked and obtained three years' leave from the Archbishop, in order to effect an exchange, if possible; and fixed myself meantime at a small village two miles from York, in which was a fine old house of the time of Queen Elizabeth, where resided the last of the squires, with his lady, who looked as if she had walked straight out of the Ark, or had been the wife of Enoch. He was a perfect specimen of the Trullibers of old; he smoked, hunted, drank beer at his door with his grooms and dogs, and spelt over the county paper on Sundays.

"At first he heard that I was a Jacobin and a dangerous fellow, and turned aside as I passed; but at length, when he found the peace of the village undisturbed, harvests much as usual, Juno and Ponto uninjured, he first bowed, then called, and at last reached such a pitch of confidence that he used to bring the papers, that I might explain the difficult words to him; actually discovered that

I had made a joke, laughed till I thought he would have died of convulsions, and ended by inviting me to see his dogs.

"All my efforts for an exchange having failed, I asked and obtained from my friend the Archbishop another year to build in. And I then set my shoulder to the wheel in good earnest; sent for an architect; he produced plans which would have ruined me. I made him my bow: 'You build for glory, Sir; I, for use." I returned him his plans, with five-and-twenty pounds, and sat down in my thinking-chair; and in a few hours Mrs Sydney and I concocted a plan which has produced what I call the model of parsonage-houses.

"I then took to horse to provide bricks and timber; was advised to make my own bricks of my own clay; of course, when the kiln was opened, all bad; mounted my horse again, and in twenty-four hours had bought thousands of bricks and tons of timber. Was advised by neighbouring gentlemen to employ oxen: bought four,—Tug and Lug, Haul and Crawl; but Tug and Lug took to fainting, and required buckets of sal-volatile, and Haul and Crawl to lie down in the mud. So I did as I ought to have done at first,—took the advice of the farmer instead of the gentleman; sold my oxen, bought a team of horses, and at last, in spite of a frost which delayed me six weeks, in spite of walls running down with wet, in spite of the advice and remonstrances of friends who predicted our death, in spite of an infant of six months old, who had never been out of the house, I landed my family in my new house nine months after laying the first stone, on the 20th of March; and performed my promise to the letter to the Archbishop, by issuing forth at midnight with a lantern to meet the last cart, with the cook and the cat, which had stuck in the mud, and fairly established them before twelve o'clock at night in the new parsonage-house;—a feat, taking ignorance, inexperience, and poverty into consideration, requiring, I assure you, no small degree of energy.

"It made me a very poor man for many years, but I never repented it. I turned schoolmaster, to educate my son, as I could not afford to send him to school. Mrs Sydney turned schoolmistress, to educate my girls, as I could not afford a governess. I turned farmer, as I could not let my land. A man-servant was too expensive; so I caught up a little garden-girl, made like a milestone, christened her Bunch, put a napkin in her hand, and made her my butler. The girls taught her to read, Mrs Sydney to wait, and I undertook her morals; Bunch became the best butler in the county.

"I had little furniture, so I bought a cart-load of deals; took a carpenter (who came to me for parish relief), called Jack Robinson, with a face like a full-moon, into my service; established him in a barn, and said, 'Jack, furnish my house.' You see the result!

"At last it was suggested that a carriage was much wanted in the establishment. After diligent search, I discovered in the back settlements of a York coachmaker an ancient green chariot, supposed to have been the earliest invention of the kind. I brought it home in triumph to my admiring family. Being somewhat dilapidated, the village tailor lined it, the village blacksmith repaired it; nay, but for Mrs Sydney's earnest entreaties we believe the village painter would have exercised his genius upon the exterior; it escaped this danger, however, and the result was wonderful. Each year added to its charms: it grew younger and younger; a new wheel, a new spring; I christened it the *Immortal.* It was known all over the neighbourhood; the village boys cheered it, and the village dogs barked at it; but 'Faber meæ fortunæ' was my motto, and we had no false shame.

"Added to all these domestic cares, I was village parson, village doctor, village comforter, village magistrate, and Edinburgh Reviewer; so you see I had not much time left on my hands to regret London.

"My house was considered the ugliest in the county, but all admitted it was one of the most comfortable; and we did not die, as our friends had predicted, of the damp walls of the parsonage."

This year (1813) was one of great exertion and anxiety to him, both in body and mind. He calculated that in the course of it he must have ridden several times round the world, in going backwards and forwards from Heslington to his living, as the offices of architect, superintendent of the works, farmer, clergyman, schoolmaster, were all centred in his person; while, to add to his anxieties and responsibilities, in September of this year another son was born to him.

Soon after engaging on the building of his house, the Archbishop, who, through the kind intervention of Mr Harcourt and other friends, had been made more fully aware of the difficulties of my father's situation, most unexpectedly sent him formal permission to avoid building. Mr Allen and my father's kind friends at Holland House, on hearing of this, sent him many letters of remonstrance; for they had always hoped that some exchange might turn up, to restore him again to the south; and indeed were constantly making exertions to accomplish this object. They were most unwilling that he should embark in an undertaking which they knew would hamper him for many years to come. But my father felt it to be his duty to himself, to his parish, and to the Archbishop, whose indulgence it would be base to abuse. Being thoroughly convinced of this, he persevered in what he felt to be right, in spite of the strong temptation to do otherwise; though the necessity of erecting farm-buildings, as well as a house, ab-

sorbed not only all his available capital, but left him with a heavy debt besides.

At last, however, the deed was done, and I well remember the landing at Foston, March 1814. Indeed, how should I forget it? A day of such difficulty, discomfort, bustle, and delight, seldom occurs twice in one life.

It was a cold, bright March day, with a biting east wind. The beds we left in the morning had to be packed up and slept on at night. Waggon after waggon of furniture poured in every minute; the roads were so cut up that the carriage could not reach the door; and my mother lost her shoe in the mud, which was ankle-deep, whilst bringing her infant up to the house in her arms.

But oh, the shout of joy as we entered and took possession! It was the first time in our lives that we had inhabited a house of our own. How we admired it, ugly as it was! With what pride my dear father welcomed us, and took us from room to room; old Molly Mills, the milk-woman, who had had charge of the house, grinning with delight in the background. We thought it a palace; yet the drawing-room had no door, the bare plaster walls ran down with wet, the windows were like ground glass from the moisture which had to be wiped up several times a day by the housemaid. No carpets, no chairs, nothing unpacked; rough men bringing in rougher packages at every moment. But then was the time to behold my father! Amid the confusion, he thought for everybody, cared for everybody, encouraged everybody, kept everybody in good humour. How he exerted himself! how his loud, rich voice might be heard in all directions, ordering, arranging, explaining, till the household storm gradually subsided! Each half-hour improved our condition; fires blazed in every room. At last we all sat down to tea, spread by ourselves on a huge package before the drawing-room fire, sitting on boxes round it; and retired to sleep on beds placed upon the floor;—the happiest, merriest, and busiest family in Christendom. In a few days, through my father's active exertions, everything was arranged with tolerable comfort in the little household, and it began to assume a settled appearance.

In speaking of the establishment at Foston, Annie Kay must not be forgotten. She entered our service at nineteen years of age, but possessed a degree of sense and lady-like feeling not often found in her situation of life; and she officiated first as nurse, then as lady's-maid, afterwards as housekeeper, apothecary's boy, factotum, and friend. All who have been much at Foston or Combe Florey knew Annie Kay. She was called into consultation on every family event, and proved herself a worthy oracle; her counsels were delivered in the softest voice, with the sweetest

smile, and in the broadest Yorkshire. She ended by nursing her old master through his long and painful illness, night and day. She was with him at his death; she followed him to his grave; she was remembered in his will; she survived him but two years, which she spent in my mother's house; and, after a long and faithful service of thirty years, was buried by my mother in the same cemetery as her master, respected and lamented by all his family, as the most faithful of servants and friends.

So much for the interior of the establishment. Out-of-doors reigned Molly Mills, the cow, pig, poultry, garden, and post woman; with her short red petticoat, legs like millposts, high cheek-bones red and shrivelled like winter apples; a perfect specimen of a "yeowoman;" a sort of kindred spirit too, for she was the wit of the village, and delighted in a crack with her master, when she could get it. She was as important in her vocation as Annie Kay in hers; and Molly here, and Molly there, might be heard in every direction. Molly was always merry, willing, active, and true as gold. She had little book-learning, but sense enough to bring up two fine athletic sons, as honest as herself; though, unlike her, they were never seen to smile, but were as solemn as two owls, and would not have said a civil thing to save their lives. They ruled the farm. Add to these, the pet donkey, Bitty, already introduced to the public; a tame fawn, at last dismissed for eating the maid's clothes, which it preferred to any other diet; a lame goose, condemned at last to be roasted for eating all the fruit in the garden; together with Bunch and Jack Robinson, already mentioned,—and you have the establishment.

As magistrates were much wanted in our neighbourhood, my father had now, in addition to his numerous avocations, taken upon himself the duties of a Justice of the Peace. He set vigorously to work to study Blackstone, and made himself master of as much law as he was able, instead of blundering on, as many of his neighbours were content to do. Partly by this knowledge, partly by his good-humour, he gained considerable influence in the quorum, which used to meet once a fortnight at the little inn, called the Lobster-house; and the people used to say they were "going to get a little of Mr Smith's lobster-sauce." By dint of his powerful voice, and a little wooden hammer, he prevailed on Bob and Betty to speak one at a time. He always tried, and often succeeded, in turning foes into friends. Having a horror of the Game-laws, then in full force, and knowing, as he states in his speech on the Reform Bill, that for every ten pheasants which fluttered in the wood one English peasant was rotting in gaol, he was always secretly on the side of the poacher, much to the indignation of his fellow-magistrates, who in a poacher saw a

monster of iniquity; and he always contrived, if possible, to let him escape, rather than commit him to gaol, with the certainty of his returning to the world an accomplished villain. He endeavoured to avoid exercising his function as a magistrate in his own village when possible, as he wished to be at peace with all his parishioners.

Young delinquents he never could bear to commit. He would read them a severe lecture, and in extreme cases would call out, "John, bring me my *private gallows!*" which infallibly brought the little urchins weeping on their knees, entreating, "Oh! for God's sake, your honour, pray forgive us!" and his honour used graciously to pardon them for that time, and delay the arrival of the private gallows: he seldom had occasion to repeat the threat. Indeed, imprisonment was a subject on which his mind was much occupied. He was greatly interested by the account of Mrs Fry's benevolent exertions in prisons, and on one occasion, during a visit to town, he requested permission to accompany her to Newgate. I have heard him say he never felt more deeply affected or impressed than by the beautiful spectacle he there witnessed; it made him, he said, weep like a child. In a sermon he preached shortly after, he introduced the following passage:—

"There is a spectacle which this town now exhibits, that I will venture to call the most solemn, the most Christian, the most affecting which any human being ever witnessed. To see that holy woman in the midst of the wretched prisoners; to see them all calling earnestly upon God, soothed by her voice, animated by her look, clinging to the hem of her garment; and worshipping her as the only being who has ever loved them, or taught them, or noticed them, or spoken to them of God! This is the sight which breaks down the pageant of the world; which tells us that the short hour of life is passing away, and that we must prepare by some good deeds to meet God; that it is time to give, to pray, to comfort; to go, like this blessed woman, and do the work of our heavenly Saviour, Jesus, among the guilty, among the broken-hearted and the sick, and to labour in the deepest and darkest wretchedness of life."

On another occasion he beautifully describes real charity, as "that which no labour can weary, no ingratitude detach, no horrors disgust; that toils, that pardons, that suffers; that is seen by no man, and honoured by no man; but, like the great laws of nature, does the work of God in silence, and looks to future and to better worlds for its reward."

In February 1815, we set out on a visit to the late Sir George Philips, near Manchester; and great was the generalship, and various the contrivances, to persuade the far-famed Immortal to

convey us all, in the depth of winter, safely over Blackstone Edge, a sort of Alps between Yorkshire and Lancashire; but, under such a Hannibal, all prospered, and the Immortal covered itself with glory. In this house we spent some weeks so agreeably,—I believe, I may say, to both parties,—that the visit was by mutual consent repeated every two or three years. There was a constant succession of agreeable guests; and our kind host so revelled in my father's humour, that he was incessantly stimulating him to attack him, which my father certainly did most vigorously; yet I believe no one present enjoyed these attacks more than Sir George himself, who laughed at them almost to exhaustion.

After our return home, the chief event in the course of the summer, which broke the even tenour of our lives, was a first visit from our great neighbours, Lord and Lady Carlisle. Though not begun under the most favourable auspices, it must be mentioned in these simple annals; as from this visit proceeded not only much agreeable society, but twenty years of such warm friendship; such delicate, unvarying, unoppressive kindness; such essential benefits, from every member of that family, both old and young, as must always be remembered with gratitude by us, contributing as they did to the pleasure and comfort of my father's life, and giving him a command of books and society, which would otherwise have been quite out of his reach. In a letter written many years afterwards he says, "Castle Howard befriended me when I wanted friends; I shall never forget it till I forget all."

Our infant colony was still in so rude a state, that roads, save for a cart, had hardly been thought of. Suddenly, however, a cry was raised, that a coach and four, with outriders, were plunging about in the midst of a ploughed field near the house, and showing signals of distress. Ploughmen and ploughwomen were immediately sent off to the rescue; and at last the gold coach (as Lady Carlisle used to call it), which had mistaken the road, was guided safely up to the house, and the kind old Lord and Lady, not a little shaken, and a little cross at so rough a reception, entered the parsonage. The shakes were soon forgotten, and good humour restored; and after some severe sarcasms on the state of the approach to our house on the part of the old Earl, and promises of amendment on the part of my father, Lord Carlisle* drove off, and made us promise to come and stay with him at Castle Howard.

This was the first and last difficulty the Earl ever found in coming to Foston. From this time a week seldom passed without his driving over to occupy his snug corner by the parsonage fireside, when his conversation was so epigrammatic and full of anecdotes of past times, that it was always a most agreeable half-hour

* Grandfather of the present Earl of Carlisle.

to old and young. He never went away without leaving some little gift in the shape of game, fruit, flowers, or other token of kindness.

In 1816, my father lost his only sister, Maria, my mother's earliest friend. She was a charming person in mind and character,* but had very delicate health, and lived unmarried with her father at Bath. My father was much attached to her, and felt her loss severely. He says, in a letter, "The loss of a person whom I would have cultivated as a friend, if nature had not given her to me as a relation, is a serious evil." We all went to see my grandfather in consequence of her death, and remained some time with him.

On our return home, our poor friend Mr Horner came to pay us a farewell visit at Foston, where he was loved and valued as a brother. His health, which had been gradually failing, gave great anxiety to all his friends, and he was condemned to go and end his short but noble career in a foreign land. His mind appeared more pure and beautiful than ever; but it was a melancholy visit, extinguishing all hope, for death was stamped on his brow. Yet, young as he was, his virtues had created, in the hearts of all who knew him, a lasting monument of love and esteem, which death alone can destroy. My father says, in the sketch he wrote of Mr Horner, "There was in his look a calm, settled love of all that was honourable and good; an air of wisdom and of sweetness. You saw at once that he was a great man, whom nature had intended for a leader of human beings; you ranged yourself willingly under his banners, and cheerfully submitted to his sway." He died at Pisa in the following spring, attended by his brother, and soothed by the frequent society and regard of the Miss Allens, his early friends, who happened to be staying there. His death was deeply mourned by his country. Sir James Mackintosh says, "Never was so much honour paid in any age or nation to intrinsic claims alone: a man of thirty-eight, of obscure birth, who never filled an office, or had the power of obliging a single living creature, and whose grand title to this distinction from an English House of Commons was the belief of his virtue." My father speaks of his feelings on this loss, in the following letter to Mr Horner's younger brother:—

"*Foston, March* 23, 1817.

"My dear Sir,

"I remember no misfortune of my life which I have felt so deeply as the loss of your brother. I never saw any man who combined together so much talent, worth, and warmth of heart; and we lived together in habits of great friendship and affection for

* Bobus used to say she had carried off all the good temper of the family.

many years. I shall always retain a most lively and affectionate remembrance of him to the day of my death. We shall be most happy to see you here if you can make us a visit; I shall always meet you with those sentiments of regard and respect which are due to yourself, but never without deep feelings of grief and emotion.

"God bless you!

"S. S.

"I beg of you to give my very kind regards to your father and mother; it is in vain to speak of their loss, to write to them: I dare not do it."

And again, in a letter to Mr Whishaw, he says:—

"I have received a melancholy fragment from poor Horner,—a letter half finished at his death. I cannot say how much I was affected by it; indeed, on looking back on my own mind, I never remember to have felt an event more deeply than his death. It is very requisite that there should be a monument to Horner: it will be some little satisfaction to us all."

And in another, he says:—

"I say nothing of the great and miserable loss we have all sustained. He will always live in our recollection; and it will be useful to us all, in the great occasions of life, to reflect how Horner would act and think in them, if God had prolonged his life."

From the failure of the harvest in the year 1816 the distress amongst the poor was excessive. The wheat was generally sprouted throughout the country, and unfit for bread; and good flour was not only dear, but hardly to be procured. We, like our poorer neighbours, being unable to afford it, were obliged to consume our own sprouted wheat; and we therefore lived a whole year, without tasting bread, on thin, unleavened, sweet-tasting cakes, like frost-bitten potatoes, baked on tins, the only way of using this damaged flour. The luxury of a return to bread can hardly be imagined by those who have never been deprived of it. All this bad food produced much illness among our poor neighbours; and a fever of a dangerous and infectious kind broke out in the village. My father was indefatigable in his exertions amongst them, going from cottage to cottage, providing them with food and medicine, and seeing that they were properly attended to: his medical skill stood him in good stead now. He found it impossible at first to prevent the peasants from crowding into the infected houses; but at last the number of deaths so alarmed them, that he had equal difficulty in

inducing them to go at all, and in obtaining nurses for the sick, or even people to convey the bodies to the grave, till he shamed them into it, by threatening to become one of the bearers himself.

He was much struck by the heroic conduct of some of the Quakers of the village, who, amid the general panic, were constant and active in their attention to the sick. "Are you aware of the danger?" said my father. "Oh, we have no fears; we are in the hands of God, thou knowest," was the reply.

During the summer, Lord and Lady Holland came to look at the new parsonage-house, and pass judgment upon it, in their way to the North. They left their eldest daughter under my mother's care during their absence, to our great happiness; and during her stay, Mr Rogers spent a week at Foston, charming old and young by his kindness and inexhaustible fund of anecdote. Sir Humphry Davy, Mr Warburton, and various others, also found their way to the "Rector's Head" during the summer.

My father at this period was in the habit of riding a good deal; but, either from the badness of his horses or the badness of his riding, or perhaps from both (in spite of his various ingenious contrivances to keep himself in the saddle), he had several falls, and kept us in continual anxiety. He writes, in a letter:—"I used to think a fall from a horse dangerous, but much experience has convinced me to the contrary. I have had six falls in two years, and just behaved like the three per cents when they fall,—I got up again, and am not a bit the worse for it, any more than the stock in question." In speaking of this, he says, "I left off riding, for the good of my parish and the peace of my family; for, somehow or other, my horse and I had a habit of parting company. On one occasion I found myself suddenly prostrate in the streets of York, much to the delight of the Dissenters. Another time, my horse Calamity flung me over his head into a neighbouring parish, as if I had been a shuttlecock, and I felt grateful it was not into a neighbouring planet; but as no harm came of it, I might have persevered perhaps, if, on a certain day, a Quaker tailor from a neighbouring village, to which I had said I was going to ride, had not taken it into his head to call, soon after my departure, and request to see Mrs Sydney. She instantly, conceiving I was thrown, if not killed, rushed down to the man, exclaiming, 'Where is he? where is your master? is he hurt?' The astonished and quaking snip stood silent from surprise. Still more agitated by his silence, she exclaimed, 'Is he hurt? I insist upon knowing the worst.' 'Why, please, ma'am, it is only thy little bill, a very small account, I wanted thee to settle,' replied he, in much surprise. After this, you may suppose, I sold my horse: however, it is some comfort to know that my friend Sir George is one fall ahead of me, and is

certainly a worse rider. It is a great proof, too, of the liberality of this county, where everybody can ride as soon as they are born, that they tolerate me at all."

The horse Calamity, whose name has been thus introduced, was the first-born of several young horses bred on the farm, who turned out very fine creatures, and gained him great glory, even amongst the knowing farmers of Yorkshire; but this first production was certainly not encouraging. To his dismay, a huge, lank, large-boned foal appeared, of chestnut colour, and with four white legs. It grew apace, but its bones became more and more conspicuous. Its appetite was unbounded; grass, hay, corn, beans, food moist and dry, were all supplied in vain, and vanished down its throat with incredible rapidity. It stood, a large living skeleton, with famine written in its face, and my father christened it Calamity. As Calamity grew to maturity, he was found to be as sluggish in disposition as his master was impetuous; so my father was driven to invent a "patent Tantalus," which consisted of a small sieve of corn, suspended on a semicircular bar of iron fixed to the ends of the shafts, just beyond the horse's nose. The corn, rattling as the vehicle proceeded, stimulated Calamity to unwonted exertions; and under the hope of overtaking this imaginary feed, he did more work than all the previous provender which had been poured down his throat had been able to obtain from him.

My father was very fond of his young horses, and they all came running to meet him when he entered the field. He began their education from their birth: he taught them to wear a girth, a bridle, a saddle, to meet flags and music, to bear the firing of a pistol at their heads, from their earliest years, and he maintained that no horses were so well broken in as his.

After our settlement at Foston, an old lady, the widow of an artist, a woman of some fortune, large dimensions, considerable talents, and much oddity, came to establish herself in a small cottage at no great distance, and was so delighted with her neighbour, that she kindly offered to drop in (as she said) frequently to tea. My father, though the most social of human beings, felt rather alarmed at this threatened invasion of his privacy; yet, unwilling to hurt the old lady, he at last bethought himself of writing to her a most comical letter, full of all sorts of imaginary facts, accepting her offer, only begging to have full notice of her approach: "for," said he, "at home I sit in an old coat, which may have a hole in it; now I like to appear before you in my best. When alone we have the black kettle, we should have the urn for you; Bunch would have on her clean apron and her hair brushed, &c. &c." This answered very well for both parties. But the tale goes further. The good widow, ripe in years, at last died, leaving her

property to an amiable young female friend, whom she had adopted, and who thus became our neighbour. About the same time, an Italian refugee, of very good family, had come to settle at York, and most honourably endeavoured to support himself by giving lessons in Italian. He brought letters of introduction to my father from Lord Holland, who had known him or his family in Italy. We found him to be a man of talent, cultivation, and high feeling, and the more we saw of him the more we liked him. The Count and our neighbour frequently met at our house, and as a mutual liking seemed to be springing up, my father thought it right to make further inquiries respecting the character of the former; and finding it most satisfactory, he promoted their intercourse, which ended in a marriage from our house. The evening before the marriage, my father, fearing that the poor Count, from the necessary preparations for his marriage, might possibly be in some little difficulty for his immediate necessities, delicately offered to assist him; but, with a burst of gratitude, in his own beautiful tongue he joyously exclaimed, "Grazie! grazie! mille volte grazie, Canonico dottissimo e benefico! ho tutto pagato, ed ho ancora questo in tasca"—holding forth half-a-crown. He did not live very many years to enjoy his good fortune, but we had frequent opportunities during that period of hearing of their mutual happiness.

It was about this period, I believe, that, by Lord Ossory's death, the living of Ampthill, then vacant, came into the gift of his nephew, Lord Holland, who immediately wrote, with his usual kindness, to offer it to my father. But as this living was untenable with Foston, and of inferior value, my father was obliged to relinquish what to him would have been a source of constant enjoyment, the vicinity to Lord Holland and all his early friends; and to turn his mind, with renewed vigour, to the growing necessities of his little northern colony, which had suffered for the moment by this change of prospects put before him.

When supplying these necessities, nothing was more amusing than to accompany my father in a round of shopping, or providing for the ship, as he called it. On entering a shop where he was known, all were eager to serve him. Gradually, as he talked, all other business was suspended, and both customer and shop-boy were often seen forgetting their own business, and turning round to listen. In five minutes he seemed to know more of each man's trade than he knew himself, and had extracted from him, before he was aware, not only all he meant to tell, but all he meant to conceal; and was off on his road again, laden with useful knowledge, before the astonished burgher was aware of the wisdom which had gone out of him.

About this time we were on a visit to Bishopthorpe; and my

father had recently preached a visitation sermon, in which, amongst other things, he had recommended the clergy not to devote too much time to shooting and hunting. The Archbishop, who rode beautifully in his youth, and knew full well my father's deficiencies in that respect, said, smiling and evidently much amused, "I hear, Mr Smith, you do not approve of much riding for the clergy." "Why, my Lord," said my father, bowing with assumed gravity, "perhaps there is not *much objection*, provided they do not ride too well, and stick out their toes professionally." Mr M——, a Catholic gentleman present, looking out of the window of the room in which they were sitting, "Ah, I see," said my father, laughing, "you think you will get out, but you are quite mistaken; this is the wing where the Archbishop shuts up the Catholics; the other wing is full of Dissenters."

Coming down one morning at Foston, I found Bunch pacing up and down the passage before her master's door, in a state of great perturbation. "What is the matter, Bunch?" "Oh, ma'am, I can't get no peace of mind till I 've got master shaved, and he 's so late this morning; he 's not come down yet." This getting master shaved, consisted in making ready for him, with a large painter's brush, a thick lather in a huge wooden bowl, as big as Mambrino's helmet, which she always considered as the most important avocation of the morning

Johnson says, "The truly strong and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small." If this definition be just, my father's mind fully deserved these epithets, for he thought nothing unworthy of his talents that could be improved by them. "I dislike those large white blinds," I remember he said on one occasion; "I can't afford painted ones; now, girls, why not try *patchwork?* Get rich glazed cottons, combine your colours well, and select a classical pattern, and I am sure the effect will be very good." We exclaimed, laughed at him, remonstrated, declared it would be hideous, but obeyed. Each took a window; and under my mother's skilful direction, much to our own surprise, we executed his idea with such success that the Combe Florey and Foston blinds excited universal admiration; and there are many now alive who, I dare say, remember them, and some who imitated them.

Hearing that an old friend, a lawyer of great eminence, with his family, had been unexpectedly detained at York by the dangerous illness of a near relation, whilst his two little girls were just recovering from the whooping-cough and pining for fresh air, my father immediately insisted that the latter should be sent to Foston, and entrusted to my mother's care. This made us a little anxious, as he had never had the complaint himself: a rule therefore was

made, that the dear little girls were never to approach him nearer than arm and stick length. I can see him even now, laughingly warding them off, or, to their great delight, running away from them as they pursued him in the garden, and their bright young faces in merry conference with him at the end of his stick when they at last brought him to bay. Years have passed away since that time, and they, after growing up to beauty both of mind and body, have long, long since, I will not say sunk into their graves, but risen to that heaven, of which their pure and blameless lives made all who knew them feel they were worthy. No evil ensued; and this little incident only served to cement still closer a friendship of many years' standing. I only allude to it now to show my father's forgetfulness of self where his heart was concerned.

He never indulged in any pleasures in which his family did not share. Passionately fond of books, he hardly added one volume, through all his years of poverty, to the precious little store he brought down with him from London; although without a Cyclopædia, or many of those books of reference, of which he so often felt the want in his literary pursuits. These circumstances render yet more remarkable all that he has said and done during this period. When a present of books arrived (no very unfrequent event) from some of his kind old friends, who knew the pleasure it would afford, he was almost child-like in his delight, particularly if the binding was gay; and I have often been summoned (in my office of librarian, which I held, together with that of apothecary's boy) to arrange and re-arrange them on the shelves, in order to place them in the most conspicuous situation.

We all had our offices: he appointed my sister (who, from her talents, was well fitted for it) to be his Livy; and we have often laughed over his suggestions as to how our domestic events ought to be recorded for the advantage of posterity. But his Livy was carried off by marriage when she was too young, I fear, to have made any progress in her history. My dear mother, from her skill in domestic economy, he christened Mrs Balwhidder, in allusion to that pretty tale by Galt, called "Annals of the Parish," which he delighted in. Annie Kay was prime minister. In short, my father infused something of his spirit into the most commonplace events of life, and could not order even a dose of physic for his carter but there was fun and originality in the act.

It is said that nobody could stand with Burke under a doorway in a shower of rain without discovering that he was an extraordinary man: so of my father, I have heard it often said that it was impossible to converse with him for five minutes, and not feel he was not like other men. I have seen him melt an exquisite of the first water, in a most amusing manner. Being very punctual (too

punctual indeed,—it was the only virtue he made disagreeable), he not unfrequently arrived to dinner before the lady of the house was dressed, and received her company for her. A dandy would appear all glorious without, whose neckcloth, shirt, and white gloves were unimpeachable, and the evident result of profound study; and who, not having been introduced, of course, in true English style, appeared unconscious that another mortal was in the same room with him. My father, whose neckcloth always looked like a pudding tied round his throat, and the arrangement of whose garments seemed more the result of accident than design (yet, I ought to add, as I am now writing for those who knew him not, always looked like a gentleman, in its best sense,—that is, as one who deserved respect),—eyed him calmly for a minute, as if to take his measure, then addressed him. The dandy started, and bowed stiffly over his neckcloth. The second observation made him evidently say to himself, "Can that observation come out of that neckcloth?" The third convinced him there was something better or at least equal to neckcloths in the world; and by the time the lady of the house arrived they had sworn eternal friendship.

In the summer of this year, 1817, my uncle and his family joined us for a month at Scarborough, and afterwards returned with us to Foston; and it was during this visit that, finding my father quite unable to afford sending his eldest son Douglas to school, he most kindly offered to assist him. Not thinking himself justified in refusing Douglas so great an advantage, my father accepted a hundred a year for this purpose; and in the following year placed him at Westminster school, which he quitted some years after with great distinction, as Captain of the College.

In 1820 my father went on a visit for a few days to Lord Grey's; then to Edinburgh, to see Jeffrey and his other old friends; and returned by Lord Lauderdale's house at Dunbar. Speaking of this journey, he says, "Most people sulk in stage coaches, I always talk. I have had some amusing journeys from this habit. On one occasion, a gentleman in the coach with me, with whom I had been conversing for some time, suddenly looked out of the window as we approached York, and said, 'There is a very clever man, they say, but a d——s odd fellow, lives here,—Sydney Smith, I believe.' 'He may be a very odd fellow,' said I (taking off my hat to him and laughing), 'and I dare say he is; but odd as he is, he is here, very much at your service.' Poor man! I thought he would have sunk into his boots, and vanished through the bed of the carriage, he was so distressed; but I thought I had better tell him at once, or he might proceed to say I had murdered my grandmother, which I must have resented, you know.

"On another occasion, some years later, when I was going to Brougham Hall, two raw Scotch girls got into the coach in the dark, near Carlisle. 'It is very disagreeable getting into a coach in the dark,' exclaimed one, after arranging her bandboxes; 'one cannot see one's company.' 'Very true, Ma'am, and you have a great loss in not seeing me, for I am a remarkably handsome man.' 'No, Sir! are you really?' said both. 'Yes, and in the flower of my youth.' 'What a pity!' said they. We soon passed near a lamp-post: they both darted forward to get a look at me. 'La, Sir, you seem very stout.' 'Oh no, not at all, Ma'am, it's only my great coat.' 'Where are you going, Sir?' 'To Brougham Hall.' 'Why, you must be a very remarkable man to be going to Brougham Hall.' 'I am a very remarkable man, Ma'am.' At Penrith they got out, after having talked incessantly, and tried every possible means to discover who I was, exclaiming as they went off laughing, 'Well, it is very provoking we can't see you, but we'll find out who you are at the ball. Lord Brougham always comes to the ball at Penrith, and we shall certainly be there, and shall soon discover your name.'"

In the summer, Dr and Mrs Marcet came with their two daughters to spend some days with us.

Mrs Marcet writes:—"Mr Smith was talking after breakfast with Dr Marcet, in a very impressive and serious tone, on scientific subjects, and I was admiring the enlarged and philosophic manner in which he discoursed on them, when suddenly starting up, he stretched out his arms and said, 'Come, now let us talk a little nonsense.' And then came such a flow of wit, and joke, and anecdote, such a burst of spirits, such a charm and freshness of manner, such an irresistible laugh, that Solomon himself would have yielded to the infection, and called out, Nonsense for ever!"

I have been told that it is the opinion of one who knew my father well, and whose opinion I value, that I have hardly done justice to the more serious part of his character. If this be so, I have indeed done him grievous wrong; for this was the foundation, or rather storehouse, from which all his wit and imagination sprang, and which gave them such value in the eyes of the world; yet it is a wrong by no means easy to remedy. The expression of my father's face when at rest was that of sense and dignity; and this was the picture of his mind in the calmer and graver hours of life: but when he met (as we sometimes do) with a passage that bore the stamp of *immortality*, his countenance in an instant changed and lighted up, and a sublime thought, sight, or action, struck on his soul at once, and found a kindred spark within it. Yet, with a mind so keenly sensitive to the sublime, and so capable of appreciating all that was exalted in human nature, with a memory well

stored with the rich treasures that genius has left us, my father never, on principle, either in himself or others, encouraged those vague speculations on the unknown hereafter, or indulged in that craving desire to pierce through the darkness that surrounds the spiritual world, and glance into the Holy of Holies, so often found in men of great genius: not because he was without sympathy with such feelings, as some have supposed, for no one dealt more tenderly with the troubled mind when such fell under his care, but because he early felt the danger of such speculations, and how many of the noblest minds had been darkened and paralyzed by them—"dazzled by excess of light." His clear, healthy understanding saw at one glance that God hath said to man, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further;" and seizing therefore on religion with a firm grasp, he made it his strong staff and support in life; and, according to its precepts, doing his duty in that state of life in which it had pleased God to place him, he calmly trusted to the mercy of God for his reward, obeying the precept he ever taught, to "cast your care upon God, for He careth for you."

Mrs Marcet has just spoken of his rapid transition from sense to nonsense: I remember an instance of his equally rapid transition from gaiety to the deepest pathos. Some ladies walking with me, seeing my father sitting at his singular writing establishment in the bay, went in through his glorified windows, and established themselves round his table, he talking in his gayest and most animated manner to us all. In an instant one of those sublime ideas which find their way to every heart passed through his mind; his countenance and tone changed, and he gave expression to the thought within him, with a pathos that touched all, for there was a tear in every eye. Strange to say, vivid as this scene is to my mind, I can neither recall a word he said, nor the subject of the conversation; but it struck me as an instance of his great power and versatility of talent.

His reasoning powers are sufficiently exhibited to the world in his works. He loved argument on serious and important subjects, but always after his own fashion; throwing aside all extraneous matter, and by two or three pointed questions, marching up at once to the point. He argued with perfect temper in society, or if he saw the argument becoming long or warm, in a moment he dashed over his opponent's trenches, and was laughingly attacking him on some fresh point. Some men are said to have passed through life without knowing even the sensation of fear; such I should conceive to be the state of my father's mind with respect to envy or hatred—they were feelings so alien to his nature that he hardly discerned them when they existed in others. He gloried in excellence, and sought it in whatever rank of life it was to be found. He speaks

with admiration of "those great men on whom God has breathed a larger portion of his Spirit, and sent into the world to enlarge the empire of talents and of truth; who are the pillars of fire which brighten the darkness of the night and make straight the paths of the wilderness." In conversing on serious subjects he aimed at truth; but, as a distinguished judge of our day said of the beautiful portraits of Richmond, "He aimed at truth, but in his hands it was truth lovingly told." In sorrow or misfortune, he used to say, the great sting is self-reproach. In all the important affairs of life a man ought to make every possible exertion that he can with honour, and then, and not till then, sit down and cast his care upon God, for He careth for him. I have heard him say, "Some very excellent people tell you they dare not hope; why do they not dare to hope? To me it seems much more impious to dare to despair." I have already shown that he studied much, and had always some useful purpose in hand. The real way to improve, he said, is not so much by varied reading, as by finding out your weak points on any subject, and mastering them; this was his constant practice. But to return to Mrs Marcet.

"I was coming down-stairs the next morning (she continues), when Mr Smith suddenly said to Bunch, who was passing, 'Bunch, do you like roast duck or boiled chicken?' Bunch had probably never tasted either the one or the other in her life, but answered, without a moment's hesitation, 'Roast duck, please, Sir,' and disappeared. I laughed. 'You may laugh,' said he, 'but you have no idea of the labour it has cost me to give her that decision of character. The Yorkshire peasantry are the quickest and shrewdest in the world, but you can never get a direct answer from them; if you ask them even their own names, they always scratch their heads, and say, 'A's sur ai don't knaw, Sir;' but I have brought Bunch to such perfection, that she never hesitates now on any subject, however difficult. I am very strict with her. Would you like to hear her repeat her crimes? She has them by heart, and repeats them every day.'

"'Come here, Bunch!' (calling out to her), 'come and repeat your crimes to Mrs Marcet;' and Bunch, a clean, fair, squat, tidy little girl, about ten or twelve years of age, quite as a matter of course, as grave as a judge, without the least hesitation, and with a loud voice, began to repeat—'Plate-snatching, gravy-spilling, door-slamming, blue-bottle fly-catching, and curtsey-bobbing.' 'Explain to Mrs Marcet what blue-bottle fly-catching is.' 'Standing with my mouth open and not attending, Sir.' 'And what is curtsey-bobbing?' 'Curtseying to the centre of the earth, please, Sir.' 'Good girl; now you may go. She makes a capital waiter, I assure you; on *state* occasions Jack Robinson, my carpenter,

takes off his apron and waits too, and does pretty well, but he sometimes naturally makes a mistake and sticks a gimlet into the bread instead of a fork.'"

A short time after, being on a visit at Lord ——'s, we were sitting with a large party at luncheon, when our host's eldest son, a fine boy of between eight and nine, burst into the room, and running up to his father, began a playful skirmish with him. The boy, half in play, half in earnest, hit his father in the face, who, to carry on the joke, put up both his hands, saying, "Oh, B——, you have put out my eye." In an instant the blood mounted to the boy's temples, he flung his little arms round his father, and sobbed in such a paroxysm of grief and despair, that it was some time before even his father's two bright eyes beaming on him with pleasure could convince him of the truth, and restore him to tranquillity. When he left the room, my father, who had silently looked with much interest and emotion on the scene, said, "I congratulate you; I guarantee that boy; make your hearts easy; however he may be tossed about the world, with those feelings, and such a heart, he will come out unscathed." The father, one of those who consider their fortune but as a loan, to be employed in spreading an atmosphere of virtue and happiness around them as far as their influence reaches, is now no more, and this son occupies his place; but his widowed mother the other day reminded me how true the prophecy had proved; and the scene was so touching that I cannot resist giving it.

My father comically alludes to the solitary life we led at this time, saying in one of his letters to a friend, "Let us know when you pass, and we will write a letter to tell you whether we are at home or not. It is twenty to one against our being engaged, as we only dine out once in seven or eight years, and that septennial exertion was made last year."

As our opportunities for society were thus few, my father occasionally took lodgings for us, during the assizes, at York, which enabled us to see a great deal of the principal lawyers on the northern circuit. Amongst these were some of the early legal friends he had made when living in his little house in Doughty Street, such as Scarlett, Brougham, Parke, Tindal, and many others then beginning life, but all since become of high eminence in their profession. It was on the occasion of one of these York assizes that Lord Lyndhurst, then Sir John Copley, came there on a special retainer, and dined with us, together with a large party of lawyers; and contributed not a little, by his powers of conversation, to one of the most agreeable dinners I ever remember. Little did we then guess how much he was to contribute hereafter to the happiness and comfort of my father's life. At this time

Hunt's trial was going on, and excited much interest in the public mind. My father attended through the whole trial, and has expressed in some of his letters how much he was struck by the natural and untaught ability which Hunt evinced in the conduct and defence of his cause.

This summer (1820) my father went with his family to Bishop's Lydiard, in Somersetshire, to visit my grandfather, who, though now very old, was still in high vigour, both of body and mind, and, I think, more picturesque and agreeable than ever.

On our return, in the autumn, we were in great danger of having a repetition of the disastrous harvest of 1816, from the unfavourable state of the weather; and it was only by my father's constant activity and energy that this calamity was prevented. By his presence, approbation, and good-humour, he infused into his workmen such activity and goodwill, that they volunteered to continue their labours in relays all night, and persevered until the harvest was saved. He came amongst them continually, and took care to have large tables in the barn covered with meat and drink for them.

Amongst the friends my father made during the latter part of his residence in London, was Mr Grattan. On the short visits to London which he was now able to make, he sought every opportunity of cultivating Mr Grattan's society; being attracted not only by what attracted all the world, the high character and great abilities of his friend, but by the ardent zeal of the latter for the two objects which my father had always most at heart—the welfare of Ireland, and Catholic emancipation.

The death of this great man, which took place about this period (1820), was ascribed in a great measure to his coming over to England with a petition on the Catholic question, when in a state of health which rendered him unfit for such exertion. My father joined warmly in the general regret for the loss of such a man, and, in an article in the Edinburgh Review on "Ireland," shortly after, expresses his admiration in a sketch of his friend, which being as short as it is beautiful, I shall extract.

"Great men hallow a whole people, and lift up all who live in their time. What Irishman does not feel proud that he has lived in the days of Grattan? Who has not turned to him for comfort, from the false friends and open enemies of Ireland? who did not remember him in the days of its burnings, wastings, and murders? No Government ever dismayed him—the world could not bribe him—he thought only of Ireland: lived for no other object, dedicated to her his beautiful fancy, his elegant wit, his manly courage, and all the splendour of his astonishing eloquence.

"He was so born, so gifted, that poetry, forensic skill, elegant literature, and all the highest attainments of human genius were within his reach; but he thought the noblest occupation of a man was to make other men happy and free; and in that straight line he kept for fifty years, without one side-look, one yielding thought, one motive in his heart which he might not have laid open to the view of God or man."

CHAPTER VIII.

Legacy—Visit to Edinburgh—Visits London—Popularity—Letters Home and Care of Parish—Takes Son to Charterhouse—Visits Mr Rogers—Appointed Chaplain to High Sheriff—Preaches in Cathedral—Anecdote of Spencer House—Meeting of Clergy, East Riding—Petition—Speech—Living of Londesborough—Goes to Paris—Letter on Receiving Irreligious Book—Death of Father—Description of House by Friend—Love of Chess and Singing—Marriage of Youngest Daughter—Becomes Canon of Bristol—Effect produced at Bristol—Apologue.

ABOUT this time an old lady, Aunt Mary by name, who possessed considerable wealth, suddenly proposed to pay us a visit; and, as it seemed, so much approved all she saw in the little establishment at Foston, that on her death, in the following year, she left my father a most unexpected legacy. Though not large, it then seemed to us unbounded wealth. On receiving this accession of fortune, my father of course immediately released my uncle from the contribution he had so kindly made toward the expenses of my brother's education. His next step was to call us around him, saying, "You must all share in this windfall: so choose something you would like." We all made our selection, and often had cause to bless the memory of old Aunt Mary.

In the winter of the year 1821, we all went to Edinburgh on a visit to Lord Jeffrey, after ten years' absence. It was a most agreeable visit; for, in addition to the enjoyment of Lord Jeffrey's society at every stray moment he could steal from business, we were received with open arms by all our old Scotch friends; and when they do open their arms, there are no people so kind and so hospitable as the Scotch.

In May, the next year (1822), my father went to stay a short time at his brother's house in town, as indeed he usually did every spring. The rush of invitations, and the struggle for his society, when on his visits to London, would have been quite enough to turn any head less strong than his. Many weeks before he set off he used to receive invitations; and I have known him engaged every night during his stay, for three weeks beforehand. But in the midst of all this dissipation and popularity he never forgot his home and family. Every morning, at breakfast, appeared his letter to my mother, giving an account of his daily proceedings, together with minute directions about the farm and parish; not always, it must be admitted, in the most legible writing. A family council

was often held over his directions; once, so entirely without success, that, after many endeavours on our part to decipher them, as they seemed urgent, my mother cut out the passage and enclosed it to him; he returned it, saying, "he must decline ever reading his own handwriting four-and-twenty hours after he had written it." He was so aware of the badness of his writing, that in a letter to Mr Travers, who wished to see one of his sermons, he says, "I would send it to you with pleasure, but my writing is as if a swarm of ants, escaping from an ink-bottle, had walked over a sheet of paper without wiping their legs." The handwriting of his friend Lord Jeffrey was, if possible, still more illegible: my father wrote to him, on receiving one of his letters, "My dear Jeffrey,—We are much obliged by your letter, but should be still more so, were it legible. I have tried to read it from left to right, and Mrs Sydney from right to left, and we neither of us can decipher a single word of it."

The interests of his villagers, too, were not neglected. On one occasion, in a broiling sun, with no other equipage than his umbrella, he paced down to one of the public offices to obtain some information about a young soldier, the only son of a poor labourer and his wife, who were in a state of great anxiety about him, not having received any tidings of him for months. My father entered the office, hot, tired, and dusty, and I dare say very ill-dressed; and proceeded to put the necessary questions to one of the young officials, in all the splendour of whisker and waistcoat; but, after much delay and cool impertinence, obtained no satisfactory answer. He then said, giving his card and making his bow, "I have but one other question to trouble you with, Sir, and that is your name; as I am about to proceed from this door to call on your master. I came here a country clergyman, to perform my duty to my parish, and I shall inform him how his servants perform theirs." These words acted like magic. In an instant the youth stood humbled before him, "entreating pardon and silence; that he had nothing to depend on but his office, and this would ruin him." My father of course yielded, but warned him to let this be a useful lesson for the future.

One day in the winter of the following year, about six o'clock in the evening, we were assembled round a blazing fire, waiting for dinner. The weather had been unusually severe, and the roads were so filled by drifts of snow, that they were considered quite impassable. The butcher and the baker even could hardly make their way on horseback to the house, and the front door was so blocked up by snow as to be quite unapproachable. Suddenly a tremendous peal was heard on the bell: all started at the unwonted sound in such a season and at such an hour, and were lost in

conjectures what it could mean. Bunch rushed to the door, and presently entered the room breathless, exclaiming, "Please, Sir, Lord and Lady Mackincrush is com'd in a coach-and-four, and wants to stay with you, but they can't get up to the front door!" Who Lord and Lady Mackincrush could be, and why they bestowed themselves upon us, was alike a mystery. But Sydney, calling for a lantern, sallied forth, and found to his no less joy than surprise, his old friend Sir James Mackintosh and his daughter, half buried in the snow. They were extracted, warmed, and welcomed, as such friends ought to be; or rather, with such means as the little parsonage could furnish. The next morning, while we were sitting at breakfast, arrived, to our infinite amusement, Sir James's letter, announcing his intended visit, and asking whether we could receive him.

My father's sketch, in the Life of Sir James, shows his estimate of this great man; and the keen enjoyment his society ever afforded him was enhanced by the rarity of their meeting, now that he was so far removed from his former friends.

Sir James stayed with us a few days; and left behind not recollections only, but hat, books, gloves, papers, and various portions of his wardrobe, with characteristic carelessness. "What a man that would be," said my father, "had he a particle of gall, or the least knowledge of the value of red tape!" As Curran said of Grattan, "he would have governed the world."

In 1823, having received a presentation to the Charterhouse from the Archbishop of York for his second son, Wyndham, he took him there in the spring. While he was in town, Mr Rogers says; "I had been ill some weeks, confined to my bed. Sydney heard of it, found me out, sat by my bed, cheered me, talked to me, made me laugh more than I ever thought to have laughed again. The next day a bulletin was brought to my bedside, giving the physician's report of my case; the following day the report was much worse; the next day declaring there was no hope, and England would have to mourn over the loss of her sweetest poet; then I died amidst weeping friends; then came my funeral; and, lastly, a sketch of my character, all written by that pen which had the power of turning everything into sunshine and joy. Sydney never forgot his friends!"

In the course of the summer a young friend came to spend a month with us, the freshness and originality of whose character both interested and amused my father; he chanced on one occasion to call her "a nice person." "Oh, don't call me '*nice*,' Mr Sydney; people only say that where they can say nothing else." "Why? have you ever reflected what 'a *nice* person' means?" "No, Mr Sydney," said she laughing, "but I don't like it." "Well, give me pen and ink; I will show you," said my father, "a

"DEFINITION OF 'A NICE PERSON.'

"A nice person is neither too tall nor too short, looks clean and cheerful, has no prominent feature, makes no difficulties, is never misplaced, sits bodkin, is never foolishly affronted, and is void of affectations.

"A nice person helps you well at dinner, understands you, is always gratefully received by young and old, Whig and Tory, grave and gay.

"There is something in the very air of a nice person which inspires you with confidence, makes you talk, and talk without fear of malicious misrepresentation; you feel that you are reposing upon a nature which God has made kind, and created for the benefit and happiness of society. It has the effect upon the mind which soft air and a fine climate have upon the body.

"A nice person is clear of little, trumpery passions, acknowledges superiority, delights in talent, shelters humility, pardons adversity, forgives deficiency, respects all men's rights, never stops the bottle, is never long and never wrong, always knows the day of the month and the name of everybody at table, and never gives pain to any human being.

"If anybody is wanted for a party, a nice person is the first thought of; when the child is christened, when the daughter is married,—all the joys of life are communicated to nice people; the hand of the dying man is always held out to a nice person.

"A nice person never knocks over wine or melted butter, does not tread upon the dog's foot, or molest the family cat, eats soup without noise, laughs in the right place, and has a watchful and attentive eye."

This same year (1823), his eldest son, Douglas, having left Westminster with great distinction (having been elected Captain of the College, after struggling with unusual difficulties), went in the autumn to Christ Church, Oxford.* My father mentions also, in

* "His father had always taught him the Eton grammar. The intention of sending him to Westminster was sudden. The change of grammar was a dreadful difficulty, only a few months before the competition which was to admit him as a King's scholar. In addition to this, a most severe fever seized him shortly after he went to Westminster, and for six weeks kept him confined to his bed: but so eager was he for success, for our sakes, that even while keeping his bed from fever and weakness, he ever had his Westminster grammar under his pillow; and, too ill to get up, he was incessantly working at it, in spite of all we could say. The challenges last about six weeks; there were, this year, twenty-eight candidates, of whom eight were admitted; and dear Douglas was sixth, to our inexpressible joy; for I verily believe it would have broken his heart had he failed, so very desirous was he, on this first occasion that had occurred in his young life, to repay by his success all the anxious and agitating fears his father had felt about him for the future. Having become a King's scholar, the hardships and cruelties he suffered, as a junior boy, from his master, were such as at one time very nearly to compel us to remove him from the school. He was taken home for a short period, to recover from his bruises, and restore his eye. His first act, on becoming Captain him-

his letters, a most agreeable visit he made in the autumn to Bowood, meeting there Lord Holland, Luttrell, Rogers, and some other friends.

In 1824, my father took us for a short time to town, Miss Vernon having kindly lent us her house in Hertford Street. We returned to York for the assizes, as he had been appointed by Sir John Johnstone (then High Sheriff) his chaplain; and it was upon this occasion that he preached in the Cathedral two remarkable sermons, upon the unjust judge, and the lawyer who tempted Christ. There was great curiosity to hear him, particularly amongst the lawyers on the Northern Circuit, to most of whom he was personally known. The Cathedral was crowded to the utmost. I well remember the startling effect on every one present when, after rising and looking round with that calm dignity so peculiar to him in the pulpit, he slowly delivered, with his powerful voice (the two judges sitting immediately opposite), this text: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" From this opening his audience were little prepared for the following splendid eulogium which he pronounced on the office of an English judge, such as it is now exercised in this country.

"He who takes the office of a judge, as it now exists in this country, takes in his hands a splendid gem, good and glorious, perfect and pure. Shall he give it up mutilated? shall he mar it? shall he darken it? shall it emit no light? shall it be valued at no price? shall it excite no wonder? shall he find it a diamond? shall he leave it a stone?

"What should we say of the man who would wilfully destroy with fire the magnificent temple of God in which I am now preaching? Far worse is he who ruins the moral edifice of the world, which time and toil, and many prayers to God, and many sufferings of men have reared; who puts out the light of the times in which he lives, and leaves us to wander in the darkness of corruption and the desolation of sin.

"There may be, there probably is, in this church some young man who may hereafter fill the office of an English judge, when the greater part of those who hear me this day are dead and gone. Let him remember my words, and let them form and fashion his spirit. He cannot tell in what dangerous and awful times he may be placed: but, as a mariner looks to his compass in the calm, and looks to his compass in the storm, and never keeps his eye off his compass, so in every vicissitude of a judicial life,—deciding for the people, deciding against the people,—protecting the just rights of kings, or restraining their unlawful ambition,—let him ever cling

self, was to endeavour to ameliorate the condition of the juniors, and to obtain additional comforts for them from the head-master."—*From my Mother's Journal.*

to that pure, exalted, and Christian independence which towers over the little motives of life, which no hope of favour can influence, which no effort of power can control."

During one of his visits to London, at a dinner at Spencer House, the conversation turned upon dogs. "Oh," said my father, "one of the greatest difficulties I have had with my parishioners has been on the subject of dogs." "How so?" said Lord Spencer. "Why, when I first went down into Yorkshire, there had not been a resident clergyman in my parish for a hundred and fifty years. Each farmer kept a huge mastiff dog, ranging at large, and ready to make his morning meal on clergy or laity, as best suited his particular taste. I never could approach a cottage in pursuit of my calling, but I rushed into the jaws of one of these shaggy monsters. I scolded, preached, and prayed, without avail; so I determined to try what fear for their pockets would do. Forthwith appeared in the county papers a minute account of a trial of a farmer, at the Northampton Sessions, for keeping dogs unconfined; where said farmer was not only fined five pounds and reprimanded by the magistrates, but sentenced to three months' imprisonment. The effect was wonderful, and the reign of Cerberus ceased in the land." "That accounts," said Lord Spencer, "for what has puzzled me and Althorp for many years. We never failed to attend the sessions at Northampton, and we never could find out how we had missed this remarkable dog case."

In the year 1825, a meeting of the clergy of the diocese was called, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, to petition Parliament against the emancipation of the Catholics; it was held at the Tiger Inn, Beverley. My father, though much disliking such meetings, felt that, if they were called, it was his duty to attend; and, attending, to speak. Two petitions were sent up to Parliament; one to the House of Lords, to be presented by the Archbishop of York; the other to the Commons, by Sir Robert Peel; these were assented to unanimously by all the clergy present, my father's being the *only dissentient voice.**

* "*A Petition drawn up by the Rev. Sydney Smith, to be proposed at a meeting of the Clergy at Cleveland, in Yorkshire, in* 1825.

"We, the undersigned, being clergymen of the Church of England, resident within the Diocese of York, humbly petition your Honourable House to take into your consideration the state of those laws which affect the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland.

"We beg of you to inquire whether all those statutes, however wise and necessary in their origin, may not now (when the Church of England is rooted in the public affection, and the title to the throne undisputed) be wisely and safely repealed.

"We are steadfast friends to that Church of which we are members, and we wish no law repealed which is really essential to its safety; but we submit to the superior wisdom of your Honourable House, whether that Church is not sufficiently protected by its antiquity, by its learning, by its piety, and by that moderate tenor which it knows so well

In the very interesting Life of Dr Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, lately published by his daughter, she states, that at an advanced age he stood alone in the House of Lords to advocate the cause of religious toleration against all the Bench of Bishops. She speaks with honest pride of the just admiration his courage obtained from his friends, and the gratitude of the Ministry. But if this required such courage in the "*Good Bishop*," who came to that House invested with the dignity of high office, and with all the weight of the family connection whose influence first placed him there, will it be ungraceful in me to ask, Did it not require courage in my father, under a Tory administration, himself still young, poor, with a heavy debt hanging over him, without family or friends to support him there, to come forward alone, in opposition to the whole clergy of his diocese, to advocate the same cause? * In this speech he describes the advance the Catholic question had made during the session, from the astonishment of the House at the union of the Irish Catholics; and then, alluding to the effects the penal laws were producing in Ireland, he says, "We preach to our congregations that a tree is known by its fruits. What has your system done for Ireland? Her children, safe under no law, live in the very shadow of death. Has it made Ireland rich? has it made Ireland loyal? has it made Ireland free? has it made Ireland happy? From the principles of this system, from the cruelty of these laws, I turn, and turn with the homage of my whole heart, to the memorable proclamation which the monarch of these realms has lately made to his dominions of Hanover, '*That no man should be subjected to civil incapacities on account of religious opinions.*' This sentiment in the mouth of a king deserves, more than all glories and victories, the notice of the historian who is destined to tell to future ages the deeds of the English people. I hope he will lavish on it every gem which glitters in the cabinet of genius; and so uphold it to the world, that it will be remembered when Water-

how to preserve amidst the opposite excesses of mankind;—the indifference of one age, and the fanaticism of another.

"It is our earnest hope that any indulgence you might otherwise think it expedient to extend to the Catholic subjects of this realm may not be prevented by the intemperate conduct of some few members of that persuasion; that in the great business of framing a lasting religious peace for these kingdoms, the extravagance of over-heated minds, or the studied insolence of men who intend mischief, may be equally overlooked.

"If your Honourable House should in your wisdom determine that all these laws which are enacted against the Roman Catholics cannot with safety and advantage be repealed, we then venture to express a hope that such disqualifying laws alone will be suffered to remain, which you consider to be clearly required for the good of the Church and State. We feel the blessing of our own religious liberty, and we think it a serious duty to extend it to others, in every degree which sound discretion will permit."

* I hope I shall not be understood as wishing to depreciate one whom all good men must admire, but as only desirous of doing justice to my father.

loo is forgotten, and when the fall of Paris is blotted out from the memory of man."

About this period a very considerable and most unexpected addition was made to my father's income by the kind intercession and exertion of our friends at Castle Howard, who obtained from the Duke of Devonshire the living of Londesborough (at no great distance from Foston, and then tenable with it), for him to hold till the Duke's nephew, Mr Howard, should be of age to take it. This, together with Aunt Mary's legacy, put him, for the first time in his life, tolerably at his ease, as he had by this time liquidated many of the first heavy expenses entailed upon him by building. But the debt to Queen Anne's Bounty, raised on the value of the living, together with many large bills, still remained, and up to this time we had been obliged to exercise the most rigid economy. These debts weighed heavily on my father's spirits; giving him, as my mother has often told me, sleepless nights of anxiety as to the future provision for his children. When bill after bill poured in, he used to sit at his desk in an evening, carefully examining them, and gradually paying them off. On these occasions, I have not unfrequently seen him quite overcome by the feeling of the debt hanging over him; he would cover his face in his hands, and exclaim, "Ah! I see, I shall end my old age in a gaol!" This was the more striking from one whose buoyancy of spirits usually enabled him to rise above all difficulties. It made a deep impression upon us; and I remember many little family councils, to see if it were not possible to economise in something more, and lessen our daily expenses to assist him.

The following year my father accomplished what he had long wished, but had never been able to afford,—a visit to Paris. He there found Lord and Lady Holland, and many other English friends, and was introduced by them to some of the best French society. He has given his impressions of Paris in his letters to my mother. These Paris letters are, I am sorry to say, almost the only ones written to her which have been preserved; for though, when absent, he wrote to my mother regularly every day, yet the interesting matter they contained was so mixed up with directions and home details, that they were not considered of permanent value. The only purchase he made for himself in Paris, though he brought us all a gift, was a huge seal, containing the arms of a peer of France, which he met with in a broker's shop, and bought for four francs: this he declared should henceforth be the arms of his branch of the Smith family. From what he witnessed during his stay, and observing how little wisdom the Bourbons seemed to have gained from misfortune, he predicted the revolution which took place so few years afterwards. He renewed there his early ac-

quaintance with two remarkable men, Talleyrand and Pozzo di Borgo, of whom he saw a good deal.

After his return we had a visit from Lord Jeffrey; our old and valued friend Mr Whishaw, the Hannibal of his suppers; and Mr John Romilly, now Master of the Rolls.

My father, however he might indulge in attacks on what he thought the shortcomings of the Church, never for a moment tolerated anything approaching to irreligion, even in his most private transactions. He received about this time a work of irreligious tendency from the house of a considerable publisher in London, who was in the habit of occasionally presenting him with books. Many men might have passed this over as of little importance; but he felt that nothing was unimportant that had reference to such a subject. He immediately wrote to the publisher, saying, that "he could not be aware that he had sent him a work unfit to be sent to a clergyman of the Church of England, or, indeed, of any church;" and after counselling him against such publications, even with a view to mere worldly interests, he adds, "I hate the insolence, persecution, and intolerance, which so often pass under the name of religion, and, as you know, have fought against them; but I have an unaffected horror of irreligion and impiety, and every principle of suspicion and fear would be excited in me by a man who professed himself an infidel." These feelings were strongly evinced on various occasions, in some of his early letters to Jeffrey. He not only deprecates the injury to the Edinburgh Review by the admission of irreligious opinions; but declares his determination, if this were not avoided, of separating himself from a work of which he had felt hitherto so justly proud. He writes to Jeffrey:—"I hear with sorrow from Elmsley, that a very anti-christian article has crept into the last number of the Edinburgh Review. . . . You must be thoroughly aware that the rumour of infidelity decides not only the reputation, but the existence of the Review. I am extremely sorry, too, on my own account, because those who *wish* it to have been written by me, will say it *was* so." And again, in another letter:—"I must beg the favour of you to be explicit on one point. Do you mean to take care that the Review shall not profess infidel principles? Unless this is the case I must absolutely give up all connection with it."

In 1827 the Junction Ministry was formed, which combined a portion of the Whigs with the remains of Mr Canning's party. My father, knowing that there were in this Ministry many upon whom he had just claims, finding his family now grown up, his son about to enter on an expensive profession,* and aware that his clerical

* He was destined for the Law.

income would shortly be diminished to nearly one-third by the resignation of the living of Londesborough to Mr Howard, felt it due to himself and his family to make some application to his friends for preferment. He wrote therefore to one or two of those in the Ministry, and likewise to his friend Lord Brougham, stating to the latter his hopes and wishes, and requesting his influence with those in power, though he did not then belong to the Ministry. From Lord Brougham I have reason to believe he received the answer he had a right to expect from so very old a friend. From one of the others he received an answer politely deferring his promises to some future period, as I presume from the following reply, which is so very characteristic of my father, and so very unlike the usual mode of address from an expectant clergyman to a minister of state, that I shall give it; though without a name, as I have not asked permission to insert it.

"20 *Saville Row.*

"I am much obliged by your polite letter. You appeal to my good-nature to prevent me from considering your letter as a decent method of putting me off: your appeal, I assure you, is not made in vain. I do not think you mean to put me off; because I am the most prominent, and was for a long time the only clerical advocate of that question, by the proper arrangement of which you believe the happiness and safety of the country would be materially improved. I do not believe you mean to put me off; because, in giving me some promotion, you will teach the clergy, from whose timidity you have everything to apprehend, and whose influence upon the people you cannot doubt, that they may, under your Government, obey the dictates of their consciences without sacrificing the emoluments of their profession. I do not think you mean to put me off; because, in the conscientious administration of that patronage with which you are entrusted, I think it will occur to you that something is due to a person who, instead of basely chiming in with the bad passions of the multitude, has dedicated some talent and some activity to soften religious hatreds, and to make men less violent and less foolish than he found them.

"I am, sincerely yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

We received a visit in the autumn from a clergyman, who, though a comparatively recent friend, was one ever highly valued by my father, and who was afterwards promoted to the Bench. A letter he wrote on this occasion, descriptive of his visit, which has been most kindly sent me by his widow, is so graphic, and it is so flattering to my father that such a letter should have been written by

such a man, that I cannot resist inserting it here, though it speaks of things some of which have been alluded to before.

"A man's character is probably more faithfully represented in the arrangements of his home than in any other point; and Foston is a fac-simile of its master's mind, from first to last. He had no architect, but I question whether a more compact, convenient house could well be imagined. In the midst of a field, commanding no very attractive view, he has contrived to give it an air of snugness and comfort, and its internal arrangements are perfect. The drawing-room is the colour you covet, the genuine chromium, with a sort of yellow flowering pattern. It is exquisitely filled with irregular regularities,—tables, books, chairs, Indian wardrobes; everything finished in thorough taste, without the slightest reference to smartness or useless finery; and his inventive genius appears in every corner; his fires are blown into brightness by *shadrachs*, tubes furnished with air from without, opening into the centre of the fire; his poker, tongs, and shovel are secured from falling with that horrid crash which is so destructive to the nerves and temper.

"His own study has no appearance of comfort; but as he reads and writes in his family circle, in spite of talking and other interruptions, this is of less consequence. In other respects it has its attractions: there, for instance, he keeps his rheumatic armour, all of which he displayed out of a large bag, giving me an illustrated lecture upon each component part. Fancy him in a fit of rheumatism, his legs in two narrow buckets, which he calls his jack-boots; round the throat a hollow tin collar; over each shoulder a large tin thing like a shoulder of mutton; on his head a hollow tin helmet, all filled with hot water; and fancy him expiating upon each and all of them with ultra-energy.

"His bedrooms are counterparts of the lower rooms; in mine there were twenty-eight large Piranesi prints of ancient Rome, mounted just as we do ours, but without frames; and, indeed, in every vacant part of the house he has them hung up.

"His store-room is more like that of an Indiaman than anything else, containing such a complete and well-assorted portion of every possible want or wish in a country establishment.

"The same spirit prevails in his garden and farm: contrivance and singularity in every hole and corner.

"'What, in the name of wonder, is that skeleton sort of machine in the middle of your field?' 'Oh, that is my universal Scratcher; a framework so contrived, that every animal, from a lamb to a bullock, can rub and scratch itself with the greatest facility and luxury.'

"I arrived there on Saturday evening, walking from York, by which I contrived to lose my way, and take possession of another man's home and drawing-room fireside for some time before the host appeared, and the mistake was discovered.

"On Sunday we prepared for church. He was hoarse, so I was to read; against preaching I had provided by having no sermon. Good heavens! what a set-out! The family chariot, which he calls the *Immortal*, from having been altered and repaired in every possible way—the last novelty, a lining of green cloth, worked and fitted by the village tailor—appeared at the door, with a pair of shafts substituted for the pole, in which shafts stood one of his cart-horses, with the regular cart-harness, and a driver by its side. In the inside the ladies were seated: on the dicky behind I mounted with him; but his servant having placed the cushions without first putting in the wooden board, on sitting down, we sank through, to his great amusement. These preliminaries being adjusted, we set out.

"The church resembles a barn more than anything else, in size and shape; though, from two old Saxon doors, it shows claim to higher antiquity than most others. About fifty people were assembled; I entered the reading-desk; he followed the prayers with a plain, sound sermon upon the duty of forgiving injuries, but in manner and voice clearly proving that he felt what he said, and meant that others should feel it too.

"His domestic establishment is on a par with the rest: his head servant is his carpenter, and never appears excepting on company days. We were waited upon by his usual *corps domestique*, one little girl, about fourteen years of age; named, I believe, Mary or Fanny, but invariably called by them Bunch. With the most immovable gravity she stands before him when he gives his orders, the answers to which he makes her repeat verbatim, to ensure accuracy.

"Not to lose time, he farms with a tremendous speaking-trumpet from his door; a proper companion for which machine is a telescope, slung in leather, for observing what they are doing.

"On Monday came Lady H. Hall, her two daughters, and her two sons; the latter, Captain B. Hall, a *rara avis* I have long wished to see; and Peter Tytler, son (is he not?) to the author. What a charm there is in good society and well-informed people! what would you not have given to have heard the mass of wit, sense, anecdote, and instruction that flowed incessantly!"

The equipage alluded to in this letter requires a little explanation. Our house was above a mile from the little church; the roads to it were of the stiffest and deepest clay, hardly passable to women in wet weather or winter, and my mother was in delicate health. We

could not afford horses; so my father, never ashamed of showing his poverty when he thought it necessary, hit upon this rude and cheap device, to enable his family to accompany him in all weathers to church. Ludicrous as the description may appear to the reader, yet the proprieties of life were attended to. The horse, the harness, the "Immortal," and the carter, all wore their best and cleanest Sunday garb, and I think they excited respect rather than ridicule amidst his humble congregation.

A word, too, ought to be said in explanation of the drawing-room furniture alluded to in this letter with so much praise. It consisted of a few relics preserved from the valuable Indian furniture left by my grandmother, the greater part of which had been parted with by my mother for our benefit. All the rest was plain enough, though still in good taste. Economy, in the estimation of common minds, often means the absence of all taste and comfort; my father had the rare art to combine it with both. For instance, he found it added much to the expense of building to have high walls; he therefore threw the whole space of the roof into his bedrooms, coved the ceilings and papered them, and thus they were all airy, gay, cheap, and pretty. Cornices he found expensive; so not one in the house, but the paper border was thrown on the ceiling with a line of shade under it: this relieved the eye, and atoned for their absence. Marble chimney-pieces were too dear; so he hunted out a cheap, warm-looking Portland stone, had it cut after his own model, and the result was to produce some of the most cheerful, comfortable-looking fireplaces I remember, for as many shillings as the marble ones would have cost him pounds.

After my father became rich, toward the close of life, he amusingly alludes, in one of his letters, to the joy my mother would feel on finding he had put up marble chimney-pieces in his town-house.*

In his youth my father had been very fond of the game of chess, but had left it off for many years. He suddenly took it into his head to resume it this winter, and selected me, *faute de mieux*, as his antagonist. His mode of play was very characteristic,—bold, rapid attack, without a moment's pause or indecision, which I suspect would have exposed him to danger from a more experienced adversary; but as it was, with a profound contempt for my skill, promising me a shilling if I beat him, he sat down with a book in his hand, looked up for an instant, made a move, and beat me regularly every night all through the winter. At last I won my shilling, but lost my playfellow; he challenged me no more.

My father was very fond of singing, but rather slow in learning a song, though, when once he had accomplished it, he sang it very

* See Letter to Mrs Holland in the Correspondence.

correctly. As he never tired of his old friends, and had always some new one on the stocks, there was a tolerable variety of songs to select from; and, with my mother's beautiful accompaniment (she was a very accomplished musician) and his own really fine voice, our trios succeeded in pleasing him so much, that he would often *encore* himself. He was so perfectly natural, that though I think (and I have heard many people remark it) the general tendency of his conversation was to underrate himself, yet whenever he was particularly pleased or satisfied with anything he had said or done, he would say so as frankly as if he had been speaking of another person. "There is one talent I think I have to a remarkable degree," I have heard him say: "there are substances in nature called amalgams, whose property is to combine incongruous materials; now I am a moral amalgam, and have a peculiar talent for mixing up human materials in society, however repellent their natures." And certainly I have seen a party, composed of materials as ill-assorted as the individuals of the "happy family" in Trafalgar Square, drawn out and attracted together by the charm of his manner till at last you would have believed they had been born for one another.

On the 1st of January 1828 his youngest daughter, Emily, was married by the Archbishop of York to Mr Hibbert, in the little barn-church before mentioned. On the 24th of the same month Lord Lyndhurst, then Chancellor, although differing entirely from my father in politics, had the real friendship and courage to brave the opinions and opposition of his own party, and, from private friendship and the respect he had for his character and talents, to bestow on him a stall which was then vacant at Bristol. Two interesting family events coming closely upon each other.

For this promotion he always felt deeply grateful to Lord Lyndhurst, as it was of the greatest importance to him; less in a pecuniary point of view (as, though rendering *permanent* what was before *temporary*, it rather diminished than increased his previous income), than from breaking that spell which had hitherto kept him down in his profession, and enabling him to show the world how well he could fulfil its duties, wherever placed. This was strikingly exemplified at Bristol, where a strong prejudice was felt, not only against himself, by a large party, but against the Church generally; Bristol being full of Dissenters, and the cathedral almost deserted at the time of his arrival. There was a good deal of curiosity excited to learn what course he would take.

My father entered on his duties in March, and preached several sermons; but in the following November he availed himself of the first public occasion that had offered itself to make known his opinions there, and to show that they remained unchanged by time

or place on the subject of religious toleration, by preaching a sermon on the 5th of November, before the Mayor and Corporation. They came expecting to hear the usual attack on Catholics made on these occasions, and were much startled and astonished at hearing religious toleration preached from the pulpit of their cathedral, and from the lips of a dignitary of the Church. The following letter, sent to me by Lord Hatherton, gives my father's account of what passed :—

"*Lower College Green, Bristol,*
"*November* 7, 1828.

"My dear Littleton,—Many thanks for your game, and for your entertaining and interesting letter from Ireland. I direct to your country place, not knowing exactly where you will be, and presuming Mrs Littleton will know. Putting all things together, I think something will be done. The letter from the three foolish noblemen, the failure of Penenden-heath to excite a general and tumultuous feeling, are all very favourable. I share in your admiration of Lord Anglesey's administration ; I have reason to believe Ministers are a little dissatisfied with his disposition to oratory, which is thought undignified and rash in a Vice-King.

"At Bristol, on the 5th of November, I gave the Mayor and Corporation (the most Protestant Mayor and Corporation in England) such a dose of toleration as shall last them for many a year. A deputation of *pro-Popery* papers waited on me to-day to print, but I declined. I told the Corporation, at the end of my sermon, that beautiful rabbinical story quoted by Jeremy Taylor, 'As Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent,' &c, &c., which, by the bye, would make a charming and useful placard against the bigoted.

"Be assured I shall make a discreet use of the intelligence you give me, and compromise you in nothing.

"Remember me, if you please, to Wilmot Horton when you write ; I like him very much, and take a sincere interest in his welfare.

"Ever yours, dear Littleton, very sincerely,
"SYDNEY SMITH."

I have heard that this sermon occasioned an immense sensation at the time, "and the cathedral, from that period, whenever he was to preach (though previously almost deserted), was filled to suffocation. A crowd collected round the doors long before they were opened, and the heads of the standers in the aisle were so thick-set you could not have thrust in another ; and I saw the men holding up their hats above their heads, that they might not be crushed by the pressure."

"He preached," says an eye-witness, "finely and bravely on this occasion in direct opposition to the principles and prejudices of the persons in authority present; and ended by that beautiful apologue from Jeremy Taylor, illustrating Charity and Toleration, where Abraham, rising in wrath to put the wayfaring man forth from his tent for refusing to worship the Lord his God,* the voice of the Lord was heard in the tent, saying, 'Abraham! Abraham! have I borne with this man for threescore years and ten, and canst not thou bear with him for one hour?'"

"And yet," says the same eye-witness of whom I have before spoken, "never did anybody to my mind look more like a High Churchman, as he walked up the aisle to the altar,—there was an air of so much proud dignity in his appearance; and when I saw him afterwards more intimately in private life, I became aware he had a lofty, brave soul, with an intense contempt for everything that was mean, base, or truckling."

The following letter from Mr Everett gives some interesting information on this remarkable apologue before alluded to:—

"*Cambridge, 18th September* 1848.

"My dear Mrs Smith,—I duly received, a short time since, your very interesting letter of the 7th of July, with the copy of Mr Smith's speech, so kindly sent by you, and the memorandum relative to the Parable on Persecution. The speech, like everything from the same source, breathes a spirit of noble liberality and sound sense, which cannot be too highly praised. I am greatly indebted to you for giving me the opportunity of adding it to the collection of his works.

* Extract from the "Liberty of Prophesying," by Jeremy Taylor, D.D., ed. 1657, p. 606:—

§ 22. "I end with a story which I find in the Jew's[1] Books. When Abraham sat at his tent-door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staffe, weary with age and travelle, coming towards him, who was an hundred years of age; he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man eat and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God: at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to him and asked him where the stranger was; he replied, 'I thrust him away because he did not worship Thee;' God answered him, 'I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured me, and couldst not thou endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?' Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetcht him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham."

[1] Gentius, the Latin translator or Saadi at Amsterdam, was that Jew, as appears by its being copied into Taylor's second edition, subsequent to its publication at Amsterdam in 1651.

"The Parable on Persecution is one of the most curious topics in literary history. It has often been made the foundation of a charge of plagiarism against Dr Franklin, but, as I think, without foundation. In its modern form, it was first published by Lord Kames, in 1774. He says, 'It was communicated to me by Dr Franklin of Philadelphia;' but he does not say that Dr F. claimed the authorship of it. It was not long after inserted in a small collection of Dr Franklin's miscellaneous writings, published by Mr B. Vaughan (a gentleman recollected by Lord Lansdowne) in London. Mr Vaughan took it from Lord Kames's work. In 1788 it was traced to its source in Gentius's preface; and Dr Franklin having been then charged with plagiarism, some friend well acquainted with his habits vindicated him in the same work, the 'Repository,' in which the charge was made. These, and some other interesting facts, are given in the new edition (Mr Sparks's) of Franklin's Works, vol. ii., p. 118, which, with the note to Bishop Heber's Life of Jeremy Taylor, in the first volume of the works, p. 365, contains, I believe, all that is known on the subject. I see one slight mistake in this learned note: it states that the famous parable did not appear in the first edition of the 'Liberty of Prophesying,' which was published in 1647, but in the second, which was printed in 1657; the work of Gentius having appeared in the interval. I have before me a volume which purports to be the second edition of the 'Liberty of Prophesying,' published in London in 1702, and not containing the parable, but this is quite immaterial.

"I lean a little to the opinion, that Bishop Taylor *may* have taken it from some Jewish book not yet discovered. There is no reason why, if he quoted Gentius, he should not have named him. It appears from Bishop Heber's learned note, that a Jewish author, whom he names, thinks he has seen the parable among the commentaries on Genesis xviii. 1; and it is quite a curious fact, that Saadi gives it as related to him, and that he, according to his own account, while in captivity at Tripoli, was compelled to work on the fortifications 'with some Jews.' Nothing seems more likely to have happened than that a learned Jew, being a fellow-prisoner with a learned Persian, should have related to him this striking parable, of which the personages were the great Jewish Patriarch, and a devotee of the old Persian superstition of fire-worship.

"Whatever be its source, there are few teachings as impressive of Jewish or Christian wisdom. It is an undoubted chapter of that great primitive Gospel which God has written in the hearts and consciences of men, but which, like the page of revelation, is too apt to be forgotten under the influence of selfish and corrupt motives.

"I rejoice to hear that Mr Smith's works are so frequently reprinted. In this way he will for ages to come continue to teach lessons of toleration and humanity to all who speak the English tongue. There is no one of my friends in England, with respect to whom I am more frequently questioned than Mr Smith; and I esteem it one of the chief blessings of my residence in London to have known him, and been honoured with so much of his kindness. I remain, my dear Mrs Smith, with the highest regards, ever faithfully yours,

"EDWARD EVERETT."

On his appointment to the prebendal stall at Bristol, he went for the first time to Court, and he gives an amusing account of himself on the occasion.

"I found my colleague Tate, the other day, in his simplicity consulting the Archdeacon of Newfoundland what he should wear at the levee;—a man who sits bobbing for cod, and pocketing every tenth fish. However, I did worse when I went, by consulting no one; and, through pure ignorance, going to the levee in shoe-strings instead of shoe-buckles. I found, to my surprise, people looking down at my feet; I could not think what they were at. At first I thought they had discovered the beauty of my legs, but at last the truth burst on me, by some wag laughing, and thinking I had done it as a good joke. I was of course excessively annoyed to have been supposed capable of such a vulgar, unmeaning piece of disrespect, and kept my feet as coyly under my petticoats as the veriest prude in the country, till I could make my escape; so, perhaps, after all, I had better have followed my friend's example."

CHAPTER IX.

Happiness increased by his Promotion—Death of Eldest Son—Removal to Combe Florey—Rebuilding of House—Lord Jeffrey's Last Visit—Increased Popularity at Bristol—Collects Contributions to Review—French Revolution—Riots at Bristol—Speech on Reform—Letters on Preferment—Appointed Canon of St Paul's—Death of Sir James Mackintosh in 1832—Marriage of Eldest Daughter in 1834—Village Anecdotes—Christens Grandchild—Buys House in Charles Street—Stewardship at St Paul's—Tour to Holland in 1837—Talleyrand—Conversation in London, and Anecdotes—Controversy about Church—Petitions to House of Lords—Inscription for Statue of Lord Grey.

MY father's promotion in the Church was an event which added very materially to his happiness. "Moralists tell you," said he, "of the evils of wealth and station, and the happiness of poverty. I have been very poor the greatest part of my life, and have borne it as well, I believe, as most people, but I can safely say that I have been happier every guinea I have gained. I well remember, when Mrs Sydney and I were young, in London, with no other equipage than my umbrella, when we went out to dinner in a hackney-coach (a vehicle, by the bye, now become almost matter of history), when the rattling step was let down, and the proud, powdered red-plushes grinned, and her gown was fringed with straw, how the iron entered into my soul."

"I often thank God for my animal spirits. I called the other day on my friend and neighbour B——, and found him moping over the fire, wringing his hands, and in a state of the deepest melancholy, 'Why, B——, what is the matter? Here you are in the prime of life, with health, talents, education, a sensible wife, pleasing children, just come into possession of this fine old place and a good fortune, and have, moreover, the inestimable advantage of having me for a neighbour; what on earth can you want more to make you happy?' 'Very true, Sydney, very true; but' (with a deep sigh) 'have you considered the state of my roads?' 'No,' I said, 'I have certainly not taken that point into consideration, but in future I will; so good morning, B——.' Whilst I, who have never had a house, or land, or a farthing to spare, am sometimes mad with spirits, and must talk, laugh, or burst."

He had now need of all his elasticity of spirits, for there came

upon him what he declares was the first real sorrow he had known —and in truth it was a heavy one—the death of his eldest son Douglas, just as he had reached maturity, and gave promise of every excellence, both of heart and mind, that could endear him to his parents or gratify their pride.

He died, after a long and painful illness, in town, in the year 1829. I see, in my father's note-book, this simple entry:—"April 14th. My beloved son Douglas died, aged twenty-four. Alas! alas!" And afterwards: "So ends this year of my life,—a year of sorrow, from the loss of my beloved son Douglas,—the first great misfortune of my life, and one which I shall never forget." In his last hours he often called his youngest son by the name of Douglas, showing that even then he was still in his thoughts.

It was perhaps well for all parties that his promotion to the prebendal stall at Bristol having also entitled him to one of their livings, it became necessary for my father to resign Foston and settle in Somersetshire; and here again the kindness of Lord Lyndhurst enabled him to exchange Foston for the much smaller, but more beautifully-situated, living of Combe Florey, near Taunton.

We all at the time deeply regretted leaving our old haunts in Yorkshire, where we had lived so long, received so much hospitality, and made so many kind friends; but this entire change of scene, and the necessity for immediate exertion, was very useful to all under this severe affliction.

In the following letter, just sent me by one of our kind Yorkshire neighbours, he alludes touchingly to his feelings of regret for his lost son Douglas.

"*Combe Florey, August* 6, 1829.

"Dear Mrs Thomson,*

"I never heard till I came here of the intended kindness of Mr Thomson and yourself, with a view to my remaining in Yorkshire. I was sensibly touched with it, and have laid it up in the archives of my mind. As to wood and lawn, cedar and fir, and pine and branching palm, I have exchanged for the better. Good, excellent, and amiable friends, such as we met with at Escrick, I did not expect to find. Fortune may grant such favours once in a life, but they must not be counted upon. Your family are always among our sincere regrets. This is a beautiful place; the house larger than Foston, with a wood of three or four acres belonging to it close to the house, and a glebe of sixty acres surrounding it, in a country everywhere most beautiful and fertile. The people are

* The present Dowager Lady Wenlock.

starving,—in the last stage of poverty and depression. Mrs Sydney, from sorrow and novelty, has forgotten her throat; I think the complaint has nearly vanished. I am busy from morning till night, in building,—not from the love of architecture, but from the fear of death,—not from a preference for any particular collocation of stones, but from an apprehension that, disdaining all collocation (as they are apt to do in ancient parsonages), they should come thundering about my head. In the meantime I have, from time to time, bitter visitations of sorrow. I never suspected how children weave themselves about the heart. My son had that quality which is longest remembered by those who remain behind,—a deep and earnest affection and respect for his parents. God save you, my dear Mrs Thomson, from similar distress! Have you read ——'s America? If you have, I hope you dislike it as much as I do. It is amusing, but very unjust and unfair. It will make his fortune at the Admiralty. Then he temporizes about the Slave Trade; with which no man should ever hold parley, but speak of it with abhorrence, as the greatest of all human abominations. We stay here till the beginning of the year, and then go into residence at Bristol. I hope to be in town in the spring, and hereafter to pay you a visit in Yorkshire, which will be a great pleasure to me. Accept, my dear Mrs and Mr Thomson, our united respects and regards,

"And believe me,

"Your sincere friend,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

At Combe Florey we had almost to begin the labours of Foston over again, as we found the parsonage-house in a most ruinous state, and requiring instant attention. It was necessary almost entirely to rebuild it; which occasioned a further loss to his family of about two thousand pounds. But my father now brought considerable experience and increased wealth to the task. Establishing us in one corner of the house, he turned in an immense gang of workmen, and in a very short time made one of the most comfortable and charming parsonages I have ever seen; a striking contrast, I must own, in every way, to poor Foston. Our friend Mr Loch, when he heard of our removal, said to my father, "Are you sure you have left Foston, Mr Smith?" "Yes." "Never to return?" "Never." "Well, then, I may venture to say that it was, without exception, the ugliest house I ever saw."

The climate, the vegetation, and the soil were all in strong contrast to the north; and it well deserved the name of Combe Florey, for it really was a valley of flowers,—a lovely little spot, where nature and art combined to realize the Happy Valley.

In the midst of our building operations, when the greater part of the roof of the house (which required renewing) was put together in rafters on the lawn, we received a visit from our friend Lord Jeffrey. I well remember our sitting out there amidst the rafters, surrounded by busy workmen, and, animated by the delicious weather and the beauty of the scene around, he and my father gave full play to their fancy and imagination, and nothing could be more delightful than to sit and watch them, and listen to the playfulness and variety of their conversation. I have, I believe, omitted several of Lord Jeffrey's visits; having, I am sorry to say, no other recollection of them than that of the pleasure they always afforded to both old and young. But this, I think, was his last visit to us; and it was touching to observe these two eminent men, who had begun the struggle of life together, who had loved each other so long and so well, who had both now attained eminence and honour in their respective professions without one act of baseness, sitting together in this little earthly paradise, and, in their elder age, talking over and looking back on the past with all the pleasure and satisfaction arising from well-spent lives. Such scenes are pleasant and useful to dwell upon.

Being now a dignitary of the Church, my father thought it more becoming to put his name to what he should hereafter write, and he therefore, about this period, withdrew from the Edinburgh Review; collecting and publishing, about ten years after, the greater part of his contributions to it.

In the winter of the year 1830 we all accompanied my father to his residence at Bristol, where his popularity increased more and more, in spite of the firmness with which he preached many unpalatable doctrines, and the minuteness with which he felt it his duty to investigate all the affairs of the Cathedral and Chapter. The latter, up to this time, had been left very much to take care of themselves: and as it was nobody's business to look after them, they had fallen into great confusion and disorder.

This year the French Revolution took place (the probability of which he had foretold in his letters from Paris in 1826), producing the greatest consternation, distress, and excitement on the Continent.

In this country the riots at Bristol had broken out in the spring; and, later in the year, the resignation of the Duke of Wellington, the introduction of the Reform Bill after Lord Grey's acceptance of the Ministry, the opposition to it in the House of Lords, and the dissolution of Parliament, were exciting the deepest interest, and producing the greatest danger of violence and disturbance in every part of England.

A large county meeting was held at Taunton on the subject of Reform. Although, as a clergyman, my father generally avoided meetings that were purely political, yet at the present moment he saw so much dangerous excitement at work amongst the people, and felt the crisis to be one of such vital importance to the country, that he considered it the duty of every man, who had the power, to raise his voice in favour of law and order; and to urge the people with calmness and perseverance to obtain those objects they would inevitably lose by violence. In this speech, amongst other things, he said:—

"Nothing can be more different than personal and political fear: it is the artifice of our opponents to confound them together. . . . The greater part of human improvements, I am sorry to say, are made after war, tumult, bloodshed, and civil commotion. . . . Mankind seems to object to every species of gratuitous happiness, and to consider every advantage as too cheap which is not purchased by some calamity. . . . I shall esteem it a singular act of God's providence if this great nation, guided by these warnings of history, not waiting till tumult for reform, not trusting reform to the lowest of the people, shall amend their decayed institutions, at a period when they are ruled by a popular Sovereign, guided by an upright minister, and blest with profound peace. . . . If many are benefited by reform, and the lower orders are not injured, this alone is reason enough for the change. But the hewer of wood and the drawer of water are benefited by reform; and the connexion between the existence of John Russell and the reduced price of bread and cheese will be as clear as it has been the object of his honest, wise, and useful life to make it. Don't be led away by nonsense. All things are dearer under a bad government, and cheaper under a good one. . . . I am old and tired,—thank me for ending; but one word more before I sit down. I am old, but I thank God I have lived to see more than my observations on human nature taught me I had any right to expect. I have lived to see an honest King, in whose word his ministers could trust. I have lived to see a King with a good heart, who, surrounded by nobles, thinks of common men; who loves the great mass of English people, and wishes to be loved by them; and who, in spite of clamour, interest, prejudice, and fear, has the manliness to carry these wise changes into immediate execution. Gentlemen, farewell! Shout for the King!"

We attended him to the meeting. I had often seen the silent effect produced by his eloquence in crowded cathedrals, but I never before saw its effect on a multitude free to express their.

feelings; and were I to live a thousand years, I should never forget it.

His voice seemed heard without effort in every part of the assembly; his words flowed with unbroken fluency; his language was simple and nervous; he seemed to hold the very heartstrings of the people in his hands, and to play upon them, as upon an instrument, at his pleasure; and when at last he sat down, the thunders of applause from that sea of heads beneath was perfectly thrilling. Such an exhibition of his powers filled one with regret that his voice was never likely to be raised in that assembly of his country where his talents and his character would have made him such an ornament, and where that noble voice would have been always raised for such noble purposes.

And here I must allude to what my father was too proud to speak of, except in two or three confidential letters to some of his oldest friends. Though at this period of his life, when his health was to a certain degree impaired, and he was no longer equal to much active exertion, he had a firm conviction that a bishopric would be destructive of his peace and happiness, and a still firmer determination, in consequence, to reject it, should it ever be offered, yet I know he felt it deeply, to the hour of his death, that those by whose side he had fought for fifty years so bravely and so honestly in their adversity, and with the most unblemished reputation as a clergyman, should in their prosperity never have offered him that which they were bestowing on many, only known at that time, according to public report (whatever merits they may have since evinced), for their mediocrity or unpopularity.

He says, in one of these letters, after expressing his feeling on this subject:—"But, thank God, I never acted from the hope of preferment, but from the love of justice and truth which was bursting within me. When I began to express my opinions on Church politics, what hope could any but a madman have of gaining preferment by such a line of conduct?"

In another letter he says:—"It is perhaps of little consequence to any party whether I adhere to it or not; but I always shall adhere to the Whigs, whoever may be put over my head; because I have an ardent love of truth and justice, and they are its best defenders. But, adhering to them under all circumstances, I cannot but feel whether I am well or ill used by them."

This silence on the subject I should have observed likewise, had not Lord Melbourne, with that noble candour for which his character was so remarkable, admitted the injury my father felt, and done my father the tardy justice of stating to a gentleman, a mutual friend, and a man of great accuracy (who came direct from his house expressly to state it to me), "That Lord Melbourne said

there was nothing he more deeply regretted, in looking back on his past career, than the not having made Sydney Smith a bishop."

A juster cause of regret was, I believe, never felt. My father's estimate of what a bishop ought to be was so high, he was so bound in honour by his own writings to become what he had required others to be, and his power of doing what he felt he ought to do was so great, that, had he ever accepted the offer, I believe there would have been no act of the Melbourne Administration which would have reflected upon it greater honour and distinction.* But I again repeat, that although ardently desiring it when he was a younger man, and fired with the ambition of showing to the world how great a blessing a *real* bishop might become, I firmly believe that at this period of his life he would not have accepted it. But I bless Lord Melbourne's memory for this wish only of justice to my father.

The following short, manly statement of his case, in a letter to Lord John Russell, seems, as it were, to have been extorted from him by that sense of justice which so powerfully influenced his feelings through life towards every person and on every subject, rather than by any wish to exalt himself; it therefore, to a certain degree, carries conviction with it. "I defy —— to quote one single passage of my writing contrary to the doctrines of the Church. I defy him to mention a single action of my life which he can call immoral. The only thing he could charge me with would be high spirits, and much innocent nonsense. I am distinguished as a preacher, and sedulous as a parochial clergyman. His real charge against me is that I am a high-spirited, honest, uncompromising man, whom he and all the bench of bishops could not turn upon vital questions: this is the reason why, as far as depends upon others, I am not a bishop. But I am thoroughly sincere in saying, I would not take any bishopric whatever." †

I find a letter, written by his friend Lord John Russell, in answer, from which I shall give an extract, as it shows that Lord Melbourne's wish to do justice to my father was shared likewise by his old friend, Lord John:—"My dear Sydney,—I think you are quite right not to be ambitious of the prelacy, as it would lead to much disquiet for you; but if I had entirely my own way in these matters, you should have the opportunity of refusing it."

And again, my father wrote at a later period to Lord Holland:—"You have said and written that you wished to see me a bishop, and, I have no doubt, would try to carry your wishes into effect. If proper vacancies had occurred in the beginning of Lord Grey's ad-

* He says, on one occasion, "I hope I am too much a man of honour to take an office without fashioning my manners and conversation so as not to bring it into discredit."

† I see in this letter that he strongly urges the appointment of several of his friends, and apparently not without effect.

ministration, I believe this would have been done. Other politicians have succeeded who entertain no such notion. But there is a still greater obstacle to my promotion, and that is, that *I have entirely lost all wish to be a bishop.* The thought is erased from my mind, and, in the very improbable event of a bishopric being offered me, I would steadily refuse it. In this I am perfectly honest and sincere, and make this communication to you to prevent your friendly exertion in my favour, and perhaps to spare you the regret of making that exertion in vain."

I lament to find that a beautiful sketch he one day drew of what he conceived the duties of a bishop to be, has been lost from among his papers. But the following short extract from his fragment on the Irish Church sufficiently shows what he felt to be the duties of so exalted a station. Even here, as usual, he draws no ideal picture of excellence, impossible to attain, and only filling the mind with despair, but one within the reach of any man of sense and real piety.

"What a blessing to this country would a real bishop be! . . .

"But I never remember in my time a real bishop—a grave, elderly man, full of Greek, with sound views of the middle voice and preterpluperfect tense, gentle and kind to his poor clergy, of powerful and commanding eloquence, in Parliament never to be put down when the great interests of mankind were concerned; leaning to the Government when it was right, leaning to the people when they were right; feeling that if the Spirit of God had called him to that high office, he was called for no mean purpose, but rather that seeing clearly, acting boldly, and intending purely, he might confer lasting benefit upon mankind."

During the period when the uncertain fate of the Reform Bill was spreading so much agitation and discontent throughout the country, there were so many mischievous publications circulating amongst the people, and threatening letters so frequently sent to my father and other gentlemen in the neighbourhood, that he thought it right to endeavour to counteract them, and published some cheap letters for circulation amongst the poor, called "Letters to Swing," of which the following is one which has been accidentally preserved.

From the "Taunton Courier" of Wednesday, Dec. 8th, 1830.

"To Mr SWING.

"The wool your coat is made of is spun by machinery, and this machinery makes your coat two or three shillings cheaper,—perhaps six or seven. Your white hat is made by machinery at half

price. The coals you burn are pulled out of the pit by machinery, and are sold to you much cheaper than they could be if they were pulled out by hand. You do not complain of *these* machines, because they do you good, though they throw many artisans out of work. But what right have you to object to fanning machines, which make bread cheaper to the artisans, and to avail yourselves of *other* machines which make manufactures cheaper to you?

"If all machinery were abolished, everything would be so dear that you would be ten times worse off than you now are. Poor people's cloth would get up to a guinea a yard. Hats could not be sold for less than eighteen shillings. Coals would be three shillings per hundred. It would be quite impossible for a poor man to obtain any comfort.

"If you begin to object to machinery in farming, you may as well object to a plough, because it employs fewer men than a spade. You may object to a harrow, because it employs fewer men than a rake. You may object even to a spade, because it employs fewer men than fingers and sticks, with which savages scratch the ground in Otaheite. If you expect manufacturers to turn against machinery, look at the consequence. They may succeed, perhaps, in driving machinery out of the town they live in, but they often drive the manufacturer *out* of the town also. He sets up his trade in some distant part of the country, gets new men, and the disciples of Swing are left to starve in the scene of their violence and folly. In this way the lace manufacture travelled in the time of Ludd, Swing's grandfather, from Nottingham to Tiverton. Suppose a free importation of corn to be allowed, as it ought to be, and will be. If you will not allow farmers to grow corn here as cheap as they can, more corn will come from America; for every threshing-machine that is destroyed, more *Americans* will be employed, *not* more Englishmen.

"Swing! Swing! you are a stout fellow, but you are a bad adviser. The law is up, and the Judge is coming Fifty persons in Kent are already transported, and will see their wives and children no more. Sixty persons will be hanged in Hampshire. There are two hundred for trial in Wiltshire—all scholars of Swing! I am no farmer: I have not a machine bigger than a pepper-mill. I am a sincere friend to the poor, and I think every man should live by his labour: but it cuts me to the very heart to see honest husbandmen perishing by the worst of all machines, the gallows,—under the guidance of that most fatal of all leaders,—Swing!"

One of the earliest uses my father made of his increase of wealth was to indulge himself by enlarging his library, and supplying the

deficiencies before alluded to, which he had so long suffered under. His books, which at Foston for many years had humbly occupied only the end of his little dining-room, now boldly spread themselves over three sides of a pretty odd room, dignified by the name of library,—about twenty-eight feet long and eight feet high,—ending in a bay-window supported by pillars, looking into the garden, and which he had obtained by throwing together a pantry, a passage, and a shoe-hole. In this pretty, gay room we breakfasted, he sat, and when alone we spent the evening with him. He used to say, "No furniture so charming as books, even if you never open them or read a single word."

In the year 1831 the cholera was spreading rapidly over the country, and exciting the greatest alarm and anxiety. This immediately set all my father's energies to work, to have remedies at hand for himself and the poor of his parish, and to take every precaution which the learned suggested: one of these was, never to read the accounts of its progress, which often produced such panic that the patient was half dead of fear before the cholera arrived to perfect the deed. Luckily, however, neither his remedies nor his precautions proved necessary, as the cholera respected our little happy valley, and never came near us.

Early in October, Lord John Russell and his family came to see us; and a joyful visit it was, as the Whigs had again assumed the reins of Government under their distinguished leader Lord Grey, and, with their return, gave assurance of obtaining the Reform Bill, and thus tranquillising the country.

Shortly after Lord John's visit to us, we went to stay with Lord Morley at Saltram, and whilst there my father received the news that Lord Grey* had appointed him to a Prebendal stall at St Paul's, in exchange for the one of inferior value which he then held at Bristol, and which had been presented to him by his friend Lord Lyndhurst.† These glad tidings, together with the charm of the place, the weather, the society of our charming hostess, and the many kind, warm old friends he found assembled there, who all seemed to rejoice really as if the benefit had been conferred on themselves, produced such an effect on his spirits, that it would be difficult to forget that week. I hardly ever remember him more brilliant. On his return he wrote the little squib of Mrs Partington and her battle with the Atlantic, which had a success quite unlooked for, spreading in every direction; and sketches of Mrs Partington and her mop were to be seen in the windows of all the picture-shops about the country.

* One of the first things Lord Grey said on entering Downing-street, to a relation who was with him, was, "Now I shall be able to do something for Sydney Smith."

† His brother Bobus used to say that Sydney's life was the only instance of undeviating honesty that he had ever known to answer.

1832.—This year brought with it, amongst other events, the loss of one of his early and most valued friends, Sir James Mackintosh; just at the moment when his mind seemed in the highest vigour, and he was preparing for the world some of his most important works.

Their strong friendship had been much cemented by the intimacy of my mother with the ladies of his family, and his loss was deeply lamented by both. My father loved to think of Sir James, to speak of his virtues and describe him; and it was a gratification to his feelings publicly to express his admiration of his old friend in the letter he addressed to his son, Mr Mackintosh, and published in his life of his father. In this he says:—"When I turn from living spectacles of stupidity, ignorance, and malice, and wish to think better of the world, I remember my great and benevolent friend Mackintosh." Speaking of his love of truth, his memory, and his knowledge, he says:—"Those who lived with him found they were gaining upon doubt, correcting error, enlarging the boundaries and strengthening the foundations of truth." And again he says:—"Whatever might assuage the angry passions, and arrange the conflicting interests of nations; whatever could promote peace, increase knowledge, extend commerce, diminish crime, and encourage industry; whatever could exalt human character, and could enlarge human understanding, struck at once to the heart of your father, and roused all his faculties. I have seen him in a moment, when his spirit came upon him, like a great ship of war, cut his cable, and spread his enormous canvas, and launch into a wide sea of reasoning eloquence."

During Sir James's absence in Bombay, my father was in the habit of writing constantly to him, to tell him what was going on in Europe. But these letters, full of interest, though kindly returned by Mr Mackintosh on the death of his father, have, I fear, together with all the letters of my father's boyhood, preserved carefully by his poor mother, Mrs Robert Smith, and given to mine, fallen a sacrifice to my father's mania for burning papers. I remember these early letters of his were most original and characteristic; and it was one of our greatest pleasures as children to hear them read aloud in the evening by my mother. There was likewise a large collection of letters to his friend Horner, restored at the death of the latter by his brother Mr J. Horner, which my father destroyed from thinking them of no value; but which would have been amongst the most interesting of his correspondence, as there were few whom he more loved, trusted, and honoured.

In 1834 my father took a house for a short time in Stratford Place, from whence his eldest daughter was married to Dr Holland. On this occasion he writes to Lady Holland:—"We are about to

be married; and Saba will be one day Lady Holland: she must then fit herself up with Luttrells, Rogerses, and John Russells, &c. &c.: Sydney Smith she has." In the summer he welcomed Dr Holland's three children, as if they had been his own, to spend the whole autumn in his house at Combe Florey.

"Whilst we were there, he was writing one morning in his favourite bay-window, when a pompous little man, in rusty black, was ushered in. "May I ask what procures me the honour of this visit?" said my father. "Oh," said the little man, "I am compounding a history of the distinguished families in Somersetshire, and have called to obtain the Smith arms." "I regret, sir," said my father, "not to be able to contribute to so valuable a work; but the Smiths never had any arms, and have invariably sealed their letters with their thumbs."

In truth, he could not have stumbled on a more perfect Goth than my father on the subject of ancestral distinctions. For though the Smiths were not literally reduced to their thumbs, yet, feeling how completely he had been the maker of his own fortunes, my father adopted the motto for his carriage of "Faber meæ fortunæ." He loved to repeat that answer of Junot to the old noblesse, when boasting of their line of ancestors: "Ah, ma foi! je n'en sais rien; moi je suis mon ancêtre."

During Lord Grey's administration, which terminated in July 1834, there had been but two or three vacancies for bishoprics in England (Ireland, for my father, was out of the question). There were, of course, numerous claims on Lord Grey; and out of this small number, King William IV., from kindness to Lord Grey, insisted on appointing Dr Grey, his brother, without even consulting Lord Grey. Had Lord Grey had more to bestow and remained longer in power, I have good reason to believe that his old friend Sydney Smith would not have been forgotten. This belief, it has been seen, my father stated in his letters during Lord Grey's life; and since his death I find it confirmed, from papers I possess, by one who best knew Lord Grey's feelings.

I think it was about this period that an incident happened to a poor half-mad woman, who lived at the end of our village—with a drunken husband and a swarm of children—all sunk, in consequence, into a hopeless state of poverty, dirt, and idleness, save one son, who, strange to say, had escaped the general contagion. This boy, first at school, then as apprentice to a shoemaker in a neighbouring village, had established a high character, and was the pride of his old mother's heart. Unfortunately, on carrying home some work, he was once tempted into a public-house to take (what no Somersetshire-man can resist) a draught of cider. Some strangers were in the room, and shortly after the boy's entrance a

silk handkerchief was missed; immediate search was made, and the handkerchief found on young Treble, to the poor boy's utter horror. A warrant was obtained, and the boy taken before the magistrates, who, from the evidence, and the general character of the family, were about to commit him to prison. The poor old mother, frantic with grief, came to my father, imploring his assistance, and asserting the entire innocence of her son. My father, no longer a magistrate, but touched by her sorrow, and believing the possible innocence of the boy from his previous knowledge of him, undertook the affair; went instantly to a neighbouring village, where the magistrates were sitting; obtained with some difficulty a delay, upon his undertaking to bring fresh evidence in favour of the boy; and then, with as much ardour as if his own life, and honour, and everything he held most dear, were at stake, he wrote, he investigated, he cross-examined for nearly a week, and on the day appointed attended the trial. He secured the best lawyer he could find to conduct the cause; then, I believe, spoke for the boy himself; and, by the evidence he produced, succeeded in showing, to the satisfaction of all, that the handkerchief had been hid where the boy could not have hid it under the circumstances; and that the real culprit was undoubtedly one of the men present, of notoriously bad character, who, to save himself, when the search was made, dexterously contrived to stuff it down the innocent boy's collar as he was pretending to assist in the search.

Treble was acquitted; and the wild joy and gratitude of the old ragged mother were deeply felt by my father, and her prayers for her protector I cannot believe were unheard in heaven.

As a clergyman he felt himself bound never to shrink from any duty, however revolting to his feelings. On one occasion he set out on a winter's night, lantern in hand, to visit a poor cottager seized with epileptic fits, of which disease, from some painful early associations, he had a peculiar horror; but they wished for him, and he went as usual; and I remember on his return he was much overpowered by the scene he had witnessed, and the recollection of it haunted him for many days afterwards. Several volumes of manuscript remain, consisting of his prescriptions for the poor, of which he always kept a record, that he might refer to them if necessary; and they now help me to bear testimony to his attentions and kindness to them.

Soon after coming to town the following year, at my request, he christened my eldest girl; and the emotion and deep feeling he evinced on the occasion added not a little, I remember, to the impressiveness of that beautiful service. On this occasion Miss Fox, Lord Holland's sister, stood as godmother to my little girl, and bestowed on her her own name. A few years ago my old friend

Mr Rogers said to me, "What a privileged person you are, to have had such a father and such an uncle!" In truth I feel it so. But he might have added, "And such a friend as Miss Fox," though I must share this last with so many; for who was ever so loved, so honoured, or so worthy to be so, as Miss Fox? Not to speak of her understanding (which was such as is rarely bestowed on women), there was such an atmosphere of purity, simplicity, and indulgent kindness about her, that all evil passions seemed to fly away at her approach, and a better and more amiable tone to be infused into society. Her heart was as a spot to repose on in the moral world, a place of refuge in distress, of sympathy in joy or sorrow, and of warm unvarying friendship in weal or woe.

In the autumn my father bought a small house in Charles Street, No. 33, near St John's Chapel, where he had preached with so much success when a young man on first coming to London; and he gives a comical account, in one of his letters, of the short time he should require to paper, paint, furnish it, and set it in order.

In October he took my mother and Mr and Mrs Hibbert to Paris for a short time, and in November came to town for his residence at St Paul's and to enter upon his new duties there, to his performance of which (even those least known to the world, and which he might have neglected almost without blame) some of his fellow-labourers have given most kind and gratifying testimony. The following letter, from Mr Cockerell, architect and superintendent of St Paul's Cathedral, was written some years after my father's death, to Lady B——, by whom it was sent to my mother: I give it, as showing a part of my father's character little known to the world—his powers of business.

"*Hampstead, Oct.* 24, 1851.

"Dear Lady B——,

"I have great pleasure in committing to writing, according to your request, some of those anecdotes on the practical qualities of our lamented friend, the Rev. Sydney Smith, which you listened to with so much interest last year. Referring as they do to his *Gesta* as Canon Residentiary of St Paul's, superintending more especially the repairs of the fabric, and my agency therein as the appointed surveyor and paymaster, they certainly exhibit the bold originality of his mind, and the integrity of his habits in the common transactions of business, in which duty and fidelity are alone concerned, with as much advantage as the better-known acts of his public life. And you justly insist upon my relation of them, however humble, and commonly considered beneath the dignity of biography, as perhaps more illustrative of conscientious motive and intrinsic merit, than the more striking talents which made him so justly valued and admired by the world, and as exhibiting his

character from a point of view not hitherto perhaps taken sufficiently into account.

"The routine and technical conduct of the current business of public bodies is ordinarily committed confidentially by them to those hands which have been found worthy of the trust; but on his appointment the new Canon avowed his diffidence of them in general. His experience, acquired by the habit of careful observation, had taught him to suspect, wherever the clearest evidence of rectitude was deficient; and he investigated with the greatest minuteness all transactions which were placed under his superintendence, and that with a severity of discipline neither called for nor agreeable.

"His early communications, therefore, with myself, and I may say with all the officers of the Chapter, were extremely unpleasant; but when satisfied by his methods of investigation, and by a 'little collision,' as he termed it, that all was honest and right, nothing could be more candid or kind than his subsequent treatment; and our early dislike was at length converted into unalloyed confidence and regard. As he expressed himself to one of the most valued of our staff, 'when I heard every one speak well of you, I entertained the most vehement suspicions; and I treated you as a rogue until I had tried you so far, that you could endure such harsh treatment no longer.'

"As nothing was taken upon trust at first, great were our disputes as to contracts, materials, and prices: with all of which, from the rates in the market, to those of Portland stone, putty, and white lead, he armed himself with competent information: every item was taxed, and we owe several important improvements in the administration of the works and accounts to his acumen, punctuality, and vigour. Not only did he thus adjust and scrutinise the payment of works, but nothing new could be undertaken without his survey and personal superintendence. An unpractised head and a podagrous disposition of limbs might well have excused the survey of those pinnacles and heights of our cathedral, which are to all both awful and fatiguing; but nothing daunted him; and once, when I suggested a fear that his portly person might stick fast in a narrow opening of the western towers, which we were surveying, he reassured me by declaring, that, 'if there were six inches of space, there would be room enough for him.'

"During more than a quarter of a century of my direction of these repairs, I had met with no similar sacrifice of minute attention to this department; and when it is remembered that this duty in no degree affects the funds of the Dean and Chapter, and that these repairs are from a separate fund, the administration of which only is entrusted to one of the Canons, we shall the more admire so

conscientious a discharge of this duty. Such was the minor process; but the greater measures for the enduring security of this magnificent cathedral were most important and conspicuous. The disasters of York Cathedral had exhibited the unwarrantable neglect, so general in these sacred edifices, of the common security of insurance; and in 1840, I believe, Canterbury was the only cathedral church insured. St Paul's was speedily and effectually insured in some of the most substantial offices of London: not satisfied with this security, he advised the introduction of the mains of the New River into the lower parts of the fabric, and cisterns and movable engines in the roof; and quite justifiable was his joke, 'that he would reproduce the Deluge in our cathedral.'

"The fine library of the fabric, the estimation of which was always cited by Dean Vanmildert, had long suffered by dilapidation and damp; but a stove, American indeed, and better suited to our slender finances than the dignity of our library, soon dispelled one evil, and rendered it accessible and comfortable to the studious at the same time; and the bindings were all roughly, but substantially, repaired. The restoration of the noble model, the favourite scheme of Sir Christopher Wren,—now, alas! a ruin, after one hundred and forty years of neglect,—was no less in his constant contemplation; but our funds were insufficient. The successful result of a singular dispute as to the will of Dr Clarke, in 1675, which had been brought before the Chapter by our respected Chapter clerk, Mr Hodgson, during Mr Sydney Smith's administration, caused a great addition to the fabric fund, which had before been insufficient for its purposes, and effected an increase which it is hoped will secure the cathedral from dilapidation.

"A question of law was well suited to Mr Smith's acumen and vigour, and he very materially assisted, during the progress of a suit in Chancery, instituted for the purpose of establishing the will, to its being brought to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion, to the lasting benefit of the cathedral.

"These are some of the efficient labours of our valued friend within my own professional knowledge, and they might be greatly increased by that of my colleagues in office at St Paul's; in proof of which, I am permitted by Mr Hodgson, who loved and honoured him, to quote a constant saying of his, 'That Mr Sydney Smith was one of the most strictly honest men he ever met in business.' Thus established in the respect and friendship, I may truly say, of all of us, you will conceive the regret with which I received his announcement, by a note, some years before his lamented departure, that 'I should hear with pleasure, after so much trouble, that being in the expectation of his first paralytic, he was about to give up his superintendence of my department to abler hands.'

"I have great pleasure, dear Madam, in offering you these few anecdotes, in testimony of a beloved and honoured memory, however humble and insufficiently expressed. To contribute, in any truthful and impartial way, to the just appreciation of an honest and illustrious character, is one of the most delightful duties we can be called upon to perform; and surely these traits of conscience and integrity, of which I have been the witness only, in the fastidious, troublesome, and inconspicuous duties of the business transactions of fabric accounts and repairs, may, in this sense, well deserve the record to which you have so earnestly invited me. And I have the honour to be, dear Madam, your most respectful friend and servant,

"C. R. COCKERELL."

The following testimony, from his old friend the Dean of St Paul's, is so valuable that I cannot resist inserting it:—

"No man, I should say, went on improving to so late a period of his life, both in acuteness of thought and felicity of expression. . . . Indeed the business in which I am at present engaged brings at every turn my old friend before me. I find traces of him in every particular of Chapter affairs; and on every occasion where his hand appears, I find stronger reason for respecting his sound judgment, knowledge of business, and activity of mind; above all, the perfect fidelity of his stewardship. In his care of his own interests as member of the Chapter, there was ever the most honest (rarely, if I may not say singularly honest) regard for the interests of the Chapter and the Church. His management of the affairs of St Paul's (for at one time he seems to have been *the* manager) only commenced too late, and terminated too soon."

In the autumn of the year 1837 he made a short tour in Holland, with my mother. He always lamented that the power of travelling, for which he had had always a longing desire, had been denied him till his body had become almost unequal to the fatigue of doing so. He was ever most eager to see and to hear; but with the same rapidity that characterised his thoughts, he only liked first impressions, and never dwelt ten minutes together on the same scene or picture; declared he had mastered the Louvre in a quarter of an hour, and could judge of Talma's powers in ten minutes.*

On his return, by Brussels, he received much kindness and attention from his friend M. Van de Weyer, who was then staying there, and made acquaintance with Madame Van de Weyer, his mother,

* It was this love of change that made him often write and speak of Combe Florey as an earthly paradise; and again, after some weeks, describe it as *un tombeau*. Both were genuine feelings at the moment.

with whom he was excessively struck, both from her talent and her vigour of character. He had, whilst here, the honour of an interview with King Leopold, who afterwards sent him an invitation to dine with him at his palace at Lacken, and was kind enough to send his carriage to Brussels to take him there and bring him back. He felt this unexpected honour and attention from the sovereign of a foreign country as he ought. But am I wrong in believing that such honours do more honour even to the giver than the receiver? for are they not a pledge to the people that their sovereign prizes talents and honesty wherever they are found, and whether they have been employed, as my father says, "in protecting the just rights of kings or restraining their unlawful ambition"?

He says, in a letter from Brussels, "Holland is dear, dirty, ugly. I was much struck with the commercial grandeur of Amsterdam. You must excuse me for thinking the English to be the greatest and wisest nation that ever existed in the world; we are excelled, however, in many things,—in buildings, cooking, baking, and in good manners. In setting out we went by Dunkirk, over a most atrocious country. With Dunkirk I was agreeably surprised; I found an excellent inn, good shops, and noble church and tower, and altogether a handsome city. At Yprès I was delighted with the Hôtel de Ville, one of the most magnificent Gothic buildings I ever saw. At Bruges the hall and tower are quite surprising, as is the town-house here. The Flemings are hideously ugly; so is their country; the inns are all very good. All their great towns are melancholy and under-peopled. . . I dined yesterday with Sir Hamilton Seymour. Van de Weyer has been extremely kind and hospitable to us, and his old mother is an excellent person. I am to be presented to the King to-day."

In November he came again for his residence at St Paul's, and the eagerness to obtain his society seemed to increase with his years, and to be shared equally by Whig and Tory. He used, generally during his stay in town, to give an evening party once a week. These parties were always popular, though from the numbers now assembled at them, they had not the charm of the little select suppers of his youth.

One evening, at his house, a few friends had come in to tea; amongst others, Lord Jeffrey, Dr Holland, and his sister. Some one spoke of Talleyrand. "Oh," said Sydney, "Lady Holland laboured incessantly to convince me that Talleyrand was agreeable, and was very angry because his arrival was usually a signal for my departure; but, in the first place, he never spoke at all till he had not only devoured but digested his dinner, and as this was a slow process with him, it did not occur till everybody else was asleep, or ought to have been so; and when he did speak he was

so inarticulate I never could understand a word he said." "It was otherwise with me," said Dr Holland; "I never found much difficulty in following him." "Did not you? why, my dear Holland, it was an abuse of terms to call it talking at all; for he had no teeth, and, I believe, no roof to his mouth—no uvula—no larynx—no trachea—no epiglottis—no anything. It was not talking, it was gargling; and that, by the bye, now I think of it, must be the very reason why Holland understood him so much better than I did," turning suddenly round to us with his merry laugh.

"Yet nobody's wit was of so high an order as Talleyrand's when it did come, or has so well stood the test of time. You remember when his friend Montrond* was taken ill, and exclaimed, 'Mon ami, je sens les tourmens de l'enfer.' 'Quoi! déjà?' was his reply. And when he sat at dinner between Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier, the celebrated beauty, Madame de Staël, whose beauties were certainly not those of the person, jealous of his attentions to her rival, insisted upon knowing which he would save if they were both drowning. After seeking in vain to evade her, he at last turned towards her and said, with his usual shrug, 'Ah, madame, *vous savez nager.*' And when —— exclaimed, 'Me violà entre l'esprit et la beauté,' he answered, 'Oui, et sans posséder ni l'un ni l'autre.' And of Madame ——, 'Oui, elle est belle, très-belle; mais pour la toilette, cela commence trop tard, et finit trop tôt.' Of Lord —— he said, 'C'est la bienveillance même, mais la bienveillance la plus perturbative que j'ai jamais connu.' To a friend of mine he said on one occasion, 'Miladi, voulez-vous me prêter ce livre?' 'Oui, mais vous me le rendrez?' 'Oui.' 'Parole d'honneur?' 'Oui.' 'Vous en êtes *sûr?*' 'Oui, oui, miladi; mais, pour vous le rendre, il faut absolument d'abord me le prêter.'

"What a talker that Frenchman Buchon is! Macaulay is a Trappist compared to him.

"My acquaintance with Talleyrand began many years ago, when he was an *émigré* in this country. Talking in Talleyrand's presence to my brother Bobus, who was just then beginning his career at the Bar, I said, 'Mind, Bobus, when you are Chancellor I shall expect one of your best livings.' 'Oui, mon ami,' said Bobus, 'mais d'abord je vous ferai commettre toutes les bassesses dont les prêtres sont capables.' On which Talleyrand, throwing up his hands and eyes, exclaimed, with a shrug, 'Mais quelle latitude énorme!'"

The conversation then turned on society in London, and its effect upon character. "I always tell Lady P—— she has preserved the two impossible concomitants of a London life—a good

* I find that Talleyrand used to tell this story as having passed between Cardinal De la Roche Guyon, a celebrated epicure, and his confessor

complexion and a good heart. Most London dinners evaporate in whispers to one's next-door neighbour. I make it a rule never to speak a word to mine, but fire across the table; though I broke it once when I heard a lady who sat next me, in a low, sweet voice, say, 'No gravy, Sir.' I had never seen her before, but I turned suddenly round and said, 'Madam, I have been looking for a person who disliked gravy all my life; let us swear eternal friendship.' She looked astonished, but took the oath, and, what is better, kept it. You laugh, Miss ——; but what more usual foundation for friendship, let me ask, than similarity of tastes?"

Talking of tastes, my father quite shared in his friend Mrs Opie's for light, heat, and fragrance. The first was almost a passion with him, which he indulged by means of little tin lamps with mutton-fat, in the days of his poverty; these, when a little richer, to our great joy, were exchanged for oil-lamps—and lastly, in the days of his wealth, for a profusion of wax-lights. The heat of his patent fire-places has been mentioned, and his delight in flowers was extreme. He often went into the garden the moment he was dressed, and returned with his hands full of roses, to place them on the plates at breakfast. He liked to see the young people staying in his house dressed with natural flowers, and encouraged us to invent all sorts of flowery ornaments, such as earrings and necklaces, some of which were really very graceful.

The following are some little fragments of my father's conversation in London, collected from various sources.

Some one asked if the Bishop of—— was going to marry. "Perhaps he may," said my father; "yet how can a bishop marry? How can he flirt? The most he can say is, 'I will see you in the vestry after service.'"

"Oh, don't read these twelve volumes till they are made into a *consommé* of two. Lord Dudley did still better, he waited till they blew over."

Talking of tithes: "It is an atrocious way of paying the clergy. The custom of tithe in kind will seem incredible to our posterity; no one will believe in the ramiferous priest officiating in the corn-field."

"Our friend —— makes all the country smell like Piccadilly."

An argument arose, in which my father observed how many of the most eminent men of the world had been diminutive in person; and after naming several among the ancients, he added, "Why, look there at Jeffrey; and there is my little friend ——, who has not body enough to cover his mind decently with; his intellect is improperly exposed."

"Oh, don't mind the caprices of fashionable women; they are as gross as poodles fed on milk and muffins."

"Simplicity is a great object in a great book; it is not wanted in a short one."

"You will generally see in human life the round man and the angular man planted in the wrong hole; but the Bishop of——, being a round man, has fallen into a triangular hole, and is far better off than many triangular men who have fallen into round holes."

"The great charm of Sheridan's speaking was his multifariousness of style."

"Fox wrote drop by drop."

"When I took my Yorkshire servants into Somersetshire, I found that they thought making a drink out of apples was a tempting of Providence, who had intended barley to be the only natural material of intoxication."

"We naturally lose illusions as we get older, like teeth, but there is no Cartwright to fit a new set into our understandings. I have, alas! only one illusion left, and that is the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Speaking of the long debates in the House: "Why will not people remember the flood? If they had lived before it with the patriarchs, they might have talked any stuff they pleased; but do let them remember how little time they have under this new order of things.'

Going one morning to join a breakfast-party at the Clarendon, my father, on entering the room, unexpectedly found his friend Jeffrey prostrate on his back, and Mr Henning, the sculptor, in the act of covering his face with plaster of Paris, in order to take his cast. My father, on seeing his friend in this woful condition, as he stood by him burst forth in the words of Mark Antony, "Oh, mighty Jeffrey! dost thou lie so low? Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils, shrunk to this little measure?" when he was abruptly silenced, in full career, by the voice of old Henning, the sculptor, exclaiming, "Stop, stop, Mr Smith! for heaven's sake, stop! If Lord Jeffrey laughs, my cast is spoilt."

"The charm of London is that you are never glad or sorry for ten minutes together; in the country you are the one and the other for weeks."

"There is a New Zealand attorney just arrived in London, with 6*s.* 8*d.* tattooed all over his face,"

"Yes, he has spent all his life in letting down empty buckets into empty wells; and he is frittering away his age in trying to draw them up again."

"If you masthead a sailor for not doing his duty, why should you not weathercock a parishioner for refusing to pay tithes?"

"How is——?" "He is not very well." "Why, what is the matter?" "Oh, don't you know he has produced a couplet? When our friend is delivered of a couplet, with infinite labour and pain, he takes to his bed, has straw laid down, the knocker tied up,

expects his friends to call and make inquiries, and the answer at the door invariably is, 'Mr —— and his little couplet are as well as can be expected.' When he produces an Alexandrine he keeps his bed a day longer."

"You will find a Scotchman always says what is undermost. I, on the contrary, say everything that comes uppermost, and have all sorts of bad jokes put upon me in consequence. An American published a book, and declared I had told him there were more mad Quakers in lunatic asylums than any other sect;—quite an invention on his part. Another time Prince P—— M—— published my conversations; so when I next met him, I inquired whether this was to be a printed or manuscript one, as I should talk accordingly. He did his best to blush."

One evening, when drinking tea with Mrs Austin, the servant entering a crowded room, with a boiling tea-kettle in his hand, it seemed doubtful, nay impossible, he should make his way among the numerous groups; but, on the first approach of the steaming kettle, the crowd receded on all sides, my father among the rest, though carefully watching the progress of the lad to the table:—"I declare," said he (addressing Mrs Austin), "a man who wishes to make his way in life, and overcome all the difficulties in his path, could do nothing better than go through the world with a boiling tea-kettle in his hand."

"Never neglect your fireplaces: I have paid great attention to mine, and could burn you all out in a moment. Much of the cheerfulness of life depends upon it. Who could be miserable with that fire? What makes a fire so pleasant is, I think, that it is a live thing in a dead room."

"Such is the horror the French have of our *cuisine*, that at the dinner given in honour of Guizot at the Athenæum, they say his cook was heard to exclaim, 'Ah, mon pauvre maître! je ne le reverrai plus.'"

"Lord Wenlock told me that his ground-rent cost him five pounds a foot; that is about the price of a London footman six foot high,—thirty guineas per annum."

"I believe the parallelogram between Oxford Street, Piccadilly, Regent Street, and Hyde Park, encloses more intelligence and human ability, to say nothing of wealth and beauty, than the world has ever collected in such a space before."

"When I praised the author of the New Poor-Law the other day, three gentlemen at table took it to themselves, and blushed up to the eyes."

"Yes! you find people ready enough to do the Samaritan, without the oil and twopence."

"It is a great proof of shyness to crumble bread at dinner.

'Oh, I see you are afraid of me' (turning to a young lady who sat by him), 'you crumble your bread.' I do it when I sit by the Bishop of London, and with both hands when I sit by the Archbishop."

Addressing Rogers: "My dear R., if we were both in America, we should be tarred and feathered; and lovely as we are by nature, I should be an ostrich and you an emu."

"I once saw a dressed statue of Venus in a serious house—the Venus Millinaria."

"Ah, you flavour everything; you are the vanille of society."

"I fully intended going to America; but my parishioners held a meeting, and came to a resolution that they could not trust me with the canvas-back ducks: and I felt they were right, so gave up the project."

"My living in Yorkshire was so far out of the way that it was actually twelve miles from a lemon."

"Of course, if ever I did go to a fancy ball at all, I should go as a Dissenter."

"I think it was Luttrell who used to say '——'s face always reminded him of boiled mutton and near relations.'"

"Some people seem to be born out of their proper century. —— should have lived in the Italian republics, and —— under Charles II."

"Don't you know, as the French say, there are three sexes—men, women, and clergymen?"

"One of my great objections to the country is, that you get your letters but once a-day; here they come every five minutes."

On some one offering him oat-cake, "No, I can't eat oat-cake, it is too rich for me."

"Harrowgate seemed to me the most heaven-forgotten country under the sun. When I saw it, there were only nine mangy fir-trees there; and even they all leant away from it."

Dining at Mr Grenville's, he as usual arrived before the rest of the party. Some ladies were shortly after announced; as Mr Grenville, with his graceful dignity and cheerfulness, went forward to receive them, my father, looking after him, exclaimed to Mr Panizzi, "There, that is the man from whom we all ought to learn how to grow old!" The conversation at table turned on a subject lately treated of in Sir Charles Lyell's book, the phenomena which the earth might present to the geologists of some future period; "Let us imagine," said my father, "an excavation on the site of St Paul's. Fancy a lecture, by the Owen of some future age, on the thigh-bone of a Minor Canon, or the tooth of a Dean,—the form, qualities, the knowledge, tastes, propensities, he would discover from them." And off he went, his imagination playing on this idea in every possible way.

Some one spoke of the state of financial embarrassment of the London University at that time. "Yes, it is so great, that I understand they have already seized on the air-pump, the exhausted receiver, and galvanic batteries; and that bailiffs have been seen chasing the Professor of Modern History round the quadrangle."

Conversing in the evening, with a small circle, round Miss Berry's tea-table (who, though far advanced towards the fourscore years and ten which she afterwards attained, was still remarkable for her vigour of mind and beauty of person), my father observed the entrance of a no less remarkable person, both for talents and years, dressed in a beautiful crimson velvet gown. He started up to meet his fine old friend, exclaiming, "Exactly the colour of my preaching cushion!" and leading her forward to the light, he pretended to be lost in admiration, saying, "I really can hardly keep my hands off you; I shall be preaching on you, I fear," etc., and played with the subject to the infinite amusement of his old friend and the little circle assembled round her.

"Playfair was certainly the most delightful philomath I ever knew."

"Have you heard of Niebuhr's discoveries? All Roman history reversed; Tarquin turning out an excellent family man, and Lucretia a very doubtful character, whom Lady Davy would not have visited."

The ladies having left the room, at a dinner at Sir G. Philips's, the conversation turned on the black population of America. My father, turning to an eminent American jurist, who was here some years ago, said, "Pray, Mr ——, do tell us why you can't live on better terms with your black population." "Why, to tell you the truth, Mr Smith, they smell so abominably that we can't bear them near us." "Possibly not," said my father, "but men must not be led by the *nose* in that way: if you don't like asking them to dinner, it is surely no reason why you should not make *citizens* of them.

"'Et si non alium latè jactaret odorem,
Civis erat.'"*

Some one complaining of the interminable length of the speeches in Parliament, he said, "Don't talk to me of not being able to cough a speaker down: try the whooping-cough."

Mr Monckton Milnes was talking to Alderman ——, when the latter turned away: "You were speaking," said Sydney, "to the Lord Mayor elect. I myself felt in his presence like the Roman whom Pyrrhus tried to frighten with an elephant, and remained calm."

"When so showy a woman as Mrs —— appears at a place,

* Virgil, Georgics ii. 132. *Laurus* in the original.

though there is no garrison within twelve miles, the horizon is immediately clouded with majors."

"To take Macaulay out of literature and society, and put him in the House of Commons, is like taking the chief physician out of London during a pestilence."

"How bored children are with the wisdom of Telemachus! they can't think why Calypso is so fond of him."

Some one observing the wonderful improvement in —— since his success, "Ah!" he said, "praise is the best diet for us, after all."

One day Mr Rogers took Mr Moore and my father home in his carriage, from a breakfast; and insisted on showing them, by the way, Dryden's house, in some obscure street. It was very wet; the house looked very much like other old houses; and having thin shoes on, they both strongly remonstrated; but in vain. Rogers got out himself, and stood expecting them to do likewise; but my father, laughing and leaning out of the carriage, exclaimed, "Oh! you see why Rogers don't mind getting out, he has got goloshes on;—but, my dear Rogers, lend us each a golosh, and we will then each stand on one leg, and admire as long as you please."

"When Prescott comes to England, a Caspian Sea of soup awaits him."

"An American said to me, 'You are so funny, Mr Smith! do you know you remind me of our great joker, Dr Chamberlaque.' 'I am much honoured,' I replied, 'but I was not aware you had such a functionary in the United States.'"

At Mr Romilly's there arose a discussion on the Inferno of Dante, and the tortures he had invented. "He may be a great poet," said my father, "but as to inventing tortures, I consider him a mere bungler,—no imagination, no knowledge of the human heart. If I had taken it in hand, I would show you what torture really was. For instance (turning, merrily, to his old friend Mrs Marcet), you should be doomed to listen, for a thousand years, to conversations between Caroline and Emily, where Caroline should always give wrong explanations in chemistry, and Emily in the end be unable to distinguish an acid from an alkali. You, Macaulay, let me consider?—oh, you should be dumb. False dates and facts of the reign of Queen Anne should for ever be shouted in your ears; all liberal and honest opinions should be ridiculed in your presence; and you should not be able to say a single word during that period in their defence." "And what would you condemn me to, Mr Sydney," said a young mother. "Why, you should for ever see those three sweet little girls of yours on the point of falling down-stairs, and never be able to save them. There, what tortures are there in Dante equal to these?"

"Daniel Webster struck me much like a steam-engine in trousers."

"When I began to thump the cushion of my pulpit, on first coming to Foston, as is my wont when I preach, the accumulated dust of a hundred and fifty years made such a cloud, that for some minutes I lost sight of my congregation."

"Nothing amuses me more than to observe the utter want of perception of a joke in some minds. Mrs Jackson called the other day, and spoke of the oppressive heat of last week. 'Heat, Ma'am!' I said; 'it was so dreadful here, that I found there was nothing left for it but to take off my flesh and sit in my bones.' 'Take off your flesh and sit in your bones, Sir? Oh, Mr Smith! how could you do that?' she exclaimed, with the utmost gravity. 'Nothing more easy, Ma'am: come and see next time.' But she ordered her carriage, and evidently thought it a very unorthodox proceeding."

"Miss ——, too, the other day, walking round the grounds at Combe Florey, exclaimed, 'Oh, why do you chain up that fine Newfoundland dog, Mr Smith?' 'Because it has a passion for breakfasting on parish boys.' 'Parish boys!' she exclaimed, 'does he really eat boys, Mr Smith?' 'Yes, he devours them, buttons and all.' Her face of horror made me die of laughing."

A most curious instance of this slow perception of humour occurred once in Brook Street, where a gentleman of some rank dined at our house, with a large party, of which my father and Mr Luttrell formed a portion. My father was in high spirits, and in his happiest vein; and much brilliant conversation passed around from Mr Luttrell and others. Mr —— sat through it all with the utmost gravity. This seemed only to stimulate my father, who became more and more brilliant, till the table was in a perfect roar of laughter. The servants even, forgetting all decorum, were obliged to turn away to conceal their mirth. Mr —— alone sat unmoved, and gazing with solemn wonder at the scene around. Luttrell was so struck by this that he said, "Mr —— was a natural phenomenon whom he must observe;" so, letting the side-dishes pass by, he took out his eye-glass to watch. At last my father accidentally struck out a subject (which, for social reasons, I must not give, though it was inimitable), which touched the right spring, and he could resist no longer, but actually laughed out. Luttrell shouted victory in my ear; and resumed his wonted attention to the dinner, saying, he had never witnessed so curious a scene.

The conversation turned upon pictures. "I like pictures, without knowing anything about them; but I hate coxcombry in the fine arts, as well as in anything else. I got into dreadful disgrace with

Sir G. B. once, who, standing before a picture at Bowood, exclaimed, turning to me, 'Immense breadth of light and shade!' I innocently said, 'Yes; about an inch and a half.' He gave me a look that ought to have killed me."

At a large dinner-party my father, or some one else, announced the death of Mr Dugald Stewart, one whose name ever brings with it feelings of respect for his talents and high character. The news was received with so much levity by a lady of rank, who sat by him, that he turned round and said, "Madam, when we are told of the death of so great a man as Mr Dugald Stewart, it is usual, in civilised society, to look grave for at least the space of five seconds."

"They do nothing in Ireland as they would elsewhere. When the Dublin mail was stopped and robbed, my brother declares that a sweet female voice was heard behind the hedge, exclaiming, 'Shoot the gintleman, then, Patrick dear!'"

We were all assembled to look at a turtle that had been sent to the house of a friend, when a child of the party stooped down and began eagerly stroking the shell of the turtle. "Why are you doing that, B——?" said my father. "Oh, to please the turtle." "Why child, you might as well stroke the dome of St Paul's, to please the Dean and Chapter."

Some one naming —— as not very orthodox, "Oh," said my father, "accuse a man of being a Socinian, and it is all over with him; for the country gentlemen all think it has something to do with poaching."

"I hate bare walls; so I cover mine, you see, with pictures. took the advice once of two Royal Academicians; but brought their consultation to an abrupt termination by saying, Gentlemen, I forgot to mention that my highest price is five-and-thirty shillings. The public, it must be owned, treat my collection with great contempt; and even Hibbert, who has been brought up in the midst of fine pictures, and might know better, never will admire them. But look at that sea-piece, now; what would you desire more? It is true, the moon in the corner was rather dingy when I first bought it; so I had a new moon put in for half-a-crown, and now I consider it perfect."

Of my father's conversation in London, where of course such powers were most excited and most brilliant (except in these slight specimens, principally furnished by the kindness of a friend), I have hardly attempted to give any idea; partly because the documents that would best have enabled me to do so (his daily letters, when absent, to my mother) have not been preserved; partly because of such journals so little can and ought to be published, that they serve but to remind one of Sancho Panza's feast, where a splendid list of

names promises everything, and produces nothing;—and last, though not least, as his friend Lord John Russell observes, because it is hardly possible to describe his manner, or convey the slightest idea of what his powers really were, in their most brilliant moments, to those who have never witnessed them. Lord John adds,—and all who knew my father will agree with his conclusion,—that "in his peculiar style he has never been surpassed, and perhaps will not be equalled." I observe, with pleasure, that every sketch which has appeared of him has laid great stress upon the wonderful degree of truth, wisdom, and bold illustration, that was often concealed in these ludicrous pictures and apparent nonsense; and which not only made them valuable, but prevented their ever palling, or degenerating into mere buffoonery.

About this period began his contest with the Ecclesiastical Commission, which lasted nearly four years, and was carried on principally in a series of letters addressed to Archdeacon Singleton. In these letters, after touching slightly upon the injustice of forming such a Commission without any one to protect the interests of the inferior clergy—on the permanent and arbitrary powers granted to the Commission, under a Whig ministry—on the inclination the Commission evinced to appropriate the patronage, at the same time that they were claiming the honours of martyrdom (*à propos* to which he introduced the episode of the old chronicle of Dort, which had such extraordinary success);—touching on these, together with many other clauses very oppressive to the clergy (which were afterwards given up), he proceeds to enforce two principles. First, that if the laity desire an Establishment into which birth, wealth, station, talent, education, and character should flow; and bestow on it a revenue which, if equally divided, would hardly place the clergy on a footing with the upper servants of a nobleman's family, and would not, according to the proposed plan of spoliation, be an addition of more than £5, 12*s.* 6½*d.* per man; payment by hope, or inequality of division, were the only means of obtaining the desired end, and the prizes in the lottery must be left. Or, if the inequality in some instances was too great, the remedy should be applied where the greatest evil existed. Secondly, that the Commission, by attacking vested interests during the life-time of the incumbents, were not only guilty of great present injustice, but were admitting a most dangerous precedent, and overturning a principle that all governments had hitherto respected.

These letters, which by many have been considered as evincing more talent than almost anything he has written, produced considerable effect at the time; and the many private letters I possess, as well as the testimony of the public press, show that public opinion was strongly with him—that these measures were changes, but not

reforms—that they contributed nothing to the public good—and that they diminished nothing of the public hostility to the Church. How it terminated is well known. He concludes the controversy with this tribute to his old friend and opponent, Lord John Russell: —"You know very well, my dear Lord, in criticising parts of your Church reform, I mean nothing unkind or unfriendly to you personally. I have known you for thirty years; and I do not believe that in this country, full of good men, there is one more honest, upright, and intrepid than yourself." My father, I find, states that he has the most honourable testimony from Lord John himself, that in conducting this dispute he never exceeded the bounds of free discussion; and that he was influenced by no motive that did not affect equally the whole body to which he belonged, and whose interests he felt bound to defend.*

I am aware that these letters have afforded plausible ground for the insinuations that were made by some few, that my father, a Whig all his life, deserted his party, and attacked his friends; and, a reformer, opposed reform the moment it affected his own interest. These are grave charges, but are best met by a few facts. He attacked the Whigs when they were in power, and had everything to bestow; when they were poor and powerless, he was ever found fighting at their side. This does not look mean and base. He opposed not reform, but this reform; and this reform he had opposed upon the same principle, twenty years before, in the Edinburgh Review, under a Tory administration, when in his wildest dreams he had never hoped to be a Canon of St Paul's.† He did not, therefore, change his opinions with his position. It did not affect his personal interests, as he wanted the patronage neither for himself nor his family; and the noble use he made of valuable patronage when it did come into his hands, must sufficiently exonerate him from the suspicion of acting from interested motives in the eyes of any candid man.

The following petition from the Rev. Sydney Smith, was presented and read to the House of Lords by the Honourable the Lord Bishop of Rochester, July 1840:—

* I might add to this statement, that I have very lately received from Lord John Russell the most generous praise of these very letters (always excepting a well-known passage, which he considered unjust); and Lord John's last act has indeed so proved its injustice, that I feel sure my father, were he alive, would be the first to retract it, and to do honour to the sacrifice that has been made by his friend.

† There is also amongst his papers an amusing fragment on the subject of tithes, written about the period that question was being discussed, which, as it is but a fragment is hardly worth inserting. But in this again he speaks strongly of the necessity of inequality of payment, in order to support an Establishment so ill provided for as the Church of England; showing still further how consistent he was from first to last in his opinions on this subject as well as others.

"*To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled.*

"The humble petition of the Rev. Sydney Smith, Canon Residentiary of St Paul's, humbly showeth,—That your petitioner has bestowed considerable thought and attention upon the subject of the Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Bill, and prays that the same may not pass into a law; for the following reasons:—

"The Bill applies to the spiritual destitution of the Church, that which was left for the ornaments and rewards of the Church; and in this way gets rid of the burden of supporting the clergy, by tampering with the sacred laws of property; making, at the same time, the multitude believe that they are reforming abuses, while they are only evading duties and weakening principles.

"By lessening the rewards of the Church, it prevents men of capital from entering into it; and makes the whole wealth of those who are engaged in the service of the Church *less*, instead of increasing it.

"The whole mass of property which the Bill proposes to confiscate, will make the poor clergy a very little less poor, while its confiscation destroys the powerful stimulus of hope at the beginning of an ecclesiastical life. Two-thirds of the present deans and prebendaries have been curates and small vicars: they would, at the lowest period of their fortunes, have refused to barter their hope of future competence for the addition of a few pounds to their income; and this is *most unquestionably* the state of feeling among the lower clergy at the present moment.

"The whole of the Bill supposes that deans and chapters have made a worse use of their patronage than bishops, and this is directly contrary to truth. But what *is* true of this Bill is, that one order in the Church, who have no votes in Parliament, have been completely sacrificed to those who have votes,—that deans and prebendaries, carefully excluded from the Commission, have been condemned to confiscation,—and that the Prelate-Commissioners have not sacrificed one shilling of the aggregate income of the bishops to those spiritual destitutions of the Church, which they feel so strongly, but relieve with property not their own.

"The Bill destroys many ecclesiastical offices, which, with a little care and thought, might have been made eminently useful to literature; to the present plans of national education; to the care of dioceses in the decay and old age of bishops; and to the general support of episcopal authority; or, what is of more importance (in the present unrepresented and unsupported state of the parochial clergy), to the checks upon episcopal authority.

"This Bill habituates the Legislature to the easy and inviting

power of tampering with the property of the Church. It is utterly impossible to believe that this will be the last and the worst act of that nature.

"The law, as it now stands, enables dignified clergymen to bestow their patronage on their children and relations, who may be deserving of it. Under this sanction they have given to their sons very expensive educations at the universities. The present Bill destroys these expectations; sets at nought vested rights; and, instead of applying this provision to future members of chapters, cuts off from their rights the ancient members of those bodies, who have laid out their whole plan of life upon the faith of laws unimpugned and unrepealed for centuries; and this appears to your petitioner to be a gross act of spoliation and injustice, and contrary to the express provisions and arrangements of the Commissioners themselves.

"To give to every clergyman who has gone through the expense of an English university, and who is married and settled in the country, the income which they ought in decency and in justice to receive, would require, not only the confiscation of *all* the cathedral and episcopal property, but some millions of money in addition. A Church provided for as ours now is, can obtain a well-educated and respectable clergy only by those hopes which are excited by the unequal division and lottery of preferment. This is the real cause which has brought capital and respectability into the English Church, and peopled it with the well-educated sons of gentlemen,—an object of the greatest importance in a rich country like England. Nothing would so rapidly and certainly ensure the degradation of the Church of England, as the equal division of all its revenues among all its members.

"For these reasons, your petitioner believes the Bill in question (however well intended) to be founded on a very short-sighted policy, and that it will entail great evils upon a Church no longer unfavourable to the civil liberties of mankind—as yet untainted by [illegible]naticism—carried forward by the labours of a highly-improved [illegible]rgy—and now become as useful and as active as any church [illegible]blishment which the world has yet seen.

"[illegible]This, as it seems to your petitioner, is the last of all our insti[illegible]s upon which an experiment so daring and so dangerous [illegible] to be tried. For these reasons, your petitioner humbly [illegible]hat the Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Bill may not [illegible]o a law.

"SYDNEY SMITH."

[illegible]evious year, 1839, a statue having been erected at New-

castle, in honour of Earl Grey, my father was requested to write the inscription for it. He sent the following; but as it did not entirely meet the views of all the subscribers, it was not adopted; though I have reason to believe it was much appoved of by the family:—

TO CHARLES, EARL GREY, K.G.,
OF HOWICK, IN NORTHUMBERLAND,
THIS MONUMENT,
IN A SPIRIT OF SOLEMN RESPECT
AND DEEP GRATITUDE,
IS ERECTED, BY MANY OF HIS FELLOW-CITIZENS.
THEY HAVE SEEN HIM THROUGH A LONG LIFE
DEDICATING HIS FINE TALENTS TO PROMOTE THE BEST INTERESTS
OF MANKIND,
AND, IN EVIL DAYS, WITH HIGH MORAL COURAGE,
DEFENDING THE ALMOST EXTINGUISHED LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND.
THEY OWE TO HIM THAT MEMORABLE REFORM,
WHICH, BLENDING FREEDOM WITH LOYALTY AND ORDER,
HAS INFUSED FRESH LIFE AND ENERGY INTO ALL
OUR INSTITUTIONS;
A REFORM WHICH HE PLANNED IN HIS YOUTH,
AND BROUGHT TO TRIUMPHANT PERFECTION IN HIS ADVANCED AGE.
REMEMBERING THESE THINGS,
THEY HAVE DEEMED IT AN ACT OF SACRED JUSTICE
TO RECORD, BY A PUBLIC MONUMENT,
THEIR ADMIRATION OF THIS GREAT STATESMAN:
NOT WITHOUT HOPE
THAT THE YOUNG, SEEING WHAT THOSE QUALITIES ARE
WHICH COMMAND THE GRATITUDE OF MANKIND,
MAY STRIVE TO BE AS GOOD AND PURE AS HE
WHOSE IMAGE IS HERE PLACED BEFORE THEIR EYES.

In the course of the same year, 1839, he likewise collected and published the greater part of his contributions in the Edinburgh Review, together with "Peter Plymley," which he had not hitherto acknowledged, and he says, on doing so:—"I see very little in my reviews to alter or repent of. I always endeavoured to fight against evil, and what I thought evil then I think evil now. I am heartily glad that all our disqualifying laws for religious opinions are abolished, and I see nothing in such measures but unmixed good and real increase of strength to the Establishment. To set on foot such a journal in such times, to contribute towards it for many years, to bear patiently the reproach and poverty which it caused, and to look back and see that I have nothing to retract, and no intemperance and violence to reproach myself with, is a career of life which I must think to be extremely fortunate.

"Strange and ludicrous are the changes in human affairs! The Tories are now on the treadmill, and the well-paid Whigs are riding in chariots; with many faces, however, looking out of the windows (including that of our Prime Minister), which I never remember to have seen in the days of poverty and depression of Whiggism. Liberality is now a lucrative business. Whoever has any institution to destroy, may consider himself as a commissioner, and his fortune made; and, to my utter and never-ending astonishment, I, an old Edinburgh Reviewer, find myself fighting, in the year 1839, against the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London for the existence of the National Church."

CHAPTER X.

Visit to Combe Florey—Kindness to Grandchildren—Sudden Wealth—Recollections of his Parishioners at Foston—Death of Lord Holland: His Portrait—Letter to Mr Webster—Sketch of Revue des Deux Mondes—Letter of Mr Grenville—Visit from Mr Moore, and Verses—Bestows the Living of Edmonton on Mr Tate's Son—Letter to Mrs Sydney Smith—Address of Parishioners, and Answer—Letter of Mrs Marcet—Recipe for making Every Day Happy—Definition of Happiness—Petition to the American Congress in 1843—Effects—Speech from Mr Ticknor—Letter from Mr Wainwright—Abuse and Gifts from America—Effect of Preaching in Old Age—Letter of Miss Edgeworth—Correspondence with Sir R. Peel—Extract from Journal, with Anecdotes.

IN the summer of 1839 we went again to spend some months with my father at Combe Florey, which every year became more beautiful under his fostering care. His love of children I have before alluded to, and particularly of his little grandchildren, whose happiness he delighted to promote. He hardly ever dressed in a morning without having them round him to assist him, or to play at shaving his table with his shaving-brush and huge wooden bowl, which still remained, though the reign of Bunch had ceased. Amongst these grandchildren was an odd, clever little girl, about five years old, who amused him much by her peculiarities; one of which was, that she insisted upon understanding everything she heard, and that when baffled, as she often necessarily was, she took to roaring and kicking. On one of these occasions, my father was walking round his garden with his two arms swung behind over his black crutch-stick (his usual manner of walking), and hearing these sounds from his merry little favourite, he stopped under the open window, and called out, "What is the matter with my little girl?" "Oh," said her mother, "she cannot understand something about the Hebrews. I have tried to explain it to her; but as she has lost her temper, I have told her she must wait till she is older." He looked excessively amused at the mental ambition of the little five-years-old, but walked off in silence. Two hours after, the mother found him closeted with the youthful culprit in his favourite library, sitting in his large arm-chair, with the child on his knee, with maps, dictionary, and books piled around him, he explaining and she listening with apparently equal pleasure, till the difficulty was overcome, and the child satisfied. I must add, in justice to the little girl, that though she has retained

her love of investigation, she has fortunately left off the habit of roaring and kicking under mental difficulties.

The sudden death of his youngest brother, Courtenay, about this time (whose debt of thirty pounds my father had paid with so much difficulty at college fifty years before), without a will, put my father in possession of the third part of the very large, but to himself useless, fortune, which Courtenay had accumulated in India ; and thus, as my father has said, "in my grand climacteric I became, unexpectedly a rich man." Having the means of spending now, he spent as liberally as if he had been used to wealth all his life ; for his rigid economy in poverty had never the effect of making him penurious.

In the summer of 1840, when travelling through Yorkshire, I went with my children to see our old haunts at Foston ; and it was very gratifying to find, though nearly ten years had elapsed since he left them, how fresh my father's memory still was in the hearts of his villagers. From almost every cottage some one came out to greet me, and to remind me of some saying, or some act of kindness, or to show me his parting gift, or to remember how he "doctored" them, and to lament his loss. And as to old Molly Mills, who was still alive, it was quite affecting to see the mixture of joy and sorrow in her face, as she recalled old stories, or thought of her present loss,—"the smile on her lip, and the tear in her eye,"—as she stood talking to me at her cottage-door. I felt these were humble, but not the less precious tributes to his character.

Each year now thinned the ranks of the great men with whom he had begun life ; men not only endeared to him by social intercourse, but by that deep interest which a struggle for the same cause during so many years usually inspires. But amongst these losses, none ever fell more deeply and heavily on his heart than that of Lord Holland. He loved him, as indeed all did who had the privilege of knowing him intimately ; and he felt deeply his debt of gratitude to him in early life. Lord Holland's last illness was, I believe, short ; and on his dressing-table were found these few lines, which were sent to me by his sister, Miss Fox, after his death :—

> "Nephew of Fox, and friend of Grey,—
> Enough my meed of fame
> If those who deign'd to observe me say
> I injured neither name."

In a letter to Mrs M——, one of our oldest friends, he says, speaking of Lord Holland's death,—"It is indeed a great loss to me ; but I have learned to live, as a soldier does in war, expecting that on any one moment the best and the dearest may be killed

before his eyes. . . . I have gout, asthma, and seven other maladies, but am otherwise very well."

I see amongst my father's papers a sketch of Lord Holland, from which I shall make some extracts, as, I trust, they can only give pleasure.

"*A Portrait.*

"Great powers of reasoning, great quickness and ingenuity of proof, and a memory in the highest degree retentive; a knowledge varied and extensive, and in English history and constitutional law profound. . . . An invincible hatred of tyranny and oppression, the most ardent love of public happiness, and attachment to public rights. His conversation was lively and incessant. . . .

"As a speaker, he wanted words, which he was often forced to stop for; and he was too slow; but he atoned for these defects by sense, knowledge, simplicity, logic, vehemence, and unblemished character. There never existed in any human being a better heart, or one more purified from all the bad passions, more abounding in charity and compassion, or which seemed to be so created as a refuge to the helpless and the oppressed.

. . . . . .

"He was very acute in the discernment of character; more so, I cannot help thinking, than any public man of his time whom it has fallen to my lot to observe. He was one of the most consistent and steady politicians living in any day; in whose life, exceeding sixty-five years, there was no doubt, varying, nor shadow of change. It was one great, incessant, and unrewarded effort to resist oppression, promote justice, and restrain the abuse of power."

When Mr Webster was Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the United States, my father heard it reported from America that an accidental mistake he had made, in introducing Mr Webster, on his coming to this country some time before (I believe, to Lord Brougham) under the name of Mr Clay, was intentional, and by way of joke. Annoyed that so much impertinence and bad taste should be imputed to him, he wrote a few lines of explanation to Mr Webster, to which he received the following answer:—

"*Washington*, 1841.

"My dear Sir,

"Though exceedingly delighted to hear from you, I am yet much pained by the contents of your note; not so much however as I should be, were I not able to give a peremptory denial to the whole report. I never mentioned the incident to which you refer, as a

joke of yours,—far from it; nor did I mention it as anything extraordinary.

"My dear, good friend, do not think me such a —— as to quote or refer to any incident falling out between you and me to your disadvantage. The pleasure of your acquaintance is one of the jewels I brought home with me. I had read of you, and read you, for thirty years. I was delighted to meet you, and to have all I knew of you refreshed and brightened by the charms of your conversation. If any son of —— asserts that, either through ill-will, or love of vulgar gossip, I tell such things of you as you suppose, I pray you let him be knocked down *instanter*. And be assured, my dear Sir, I never spoke of you in my life but with gratitude, respect, and attachment.

"D. WEBSTER."

My father wrote in answer:—

"Many thanks, my dear Sir, for your obliging letter. I think better of myself because you think well of me. If, in the imbecility of old age, I forgot your name for a moment, the history of America will hereafter be more tenacious in its recollections; tenacious, because you are using your eloquent wisdom to restrain the high spirit of your countrymen within the limits of justice, and are securing to two kindred nations, who ought to admire and benefit each other, the blessings of peace. How can great talents be applied to nobler ends, or what existence can be more truly splendid?

"Ever sincerely yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

I have mentioned that my father, for reasons already given, had made a collection of his writings in the Edinburgh Review and elsewhere; and retracted what little he felt he had been led by party prejudice to say unjustly; and I cannot resist inserting here a short passage from a French review (I believe, the 'Revue des Deux Mondes'), because I think it is a trait in his character that has been unnoticed by his countrymen.

"Quoi de plus fréquent que de se dire, au fond du cœur, j'ai été trop loin—ceci n'était pas vrai, ceci était injuste? mais quoi de plus rare que de l'imprimer? Voilà ce que Sydney a noblement fait: trente ans après ses regards rencontrent une plaisanterie qu'un juge moins sévère de ses propres fautes aurait pu croire innocente, il ne peut s'empêcher de dire, 'Il n'y a rien qui dépare plus les lettres de Plymley que cette attaque dirigée contre M. Bourne, qui est une personne d'honneur et de talent; mais violà où mènent les mau-

vaises passions de l'esprit de parti.' Castlereagh n'était pas un homme vénal, cependant il l'avait représenté comme capable de recevoir de toutes mains; 'Je l'ai injustement accusé,' avoue-t-il franchement. Il est beau d'entendre de la sorte un mot fameux, et de reconnaître, en se condamnant soi-même, qu'on doit surtout la vérité à son ennemi mort."

He sent a copy of his works to each of my children in 1842, as the best memorial of himself that he could give them: alas! in how few years was it the only memorial left.

I find among the papers left me a pretty letter from his old friend Mr Grenville, to whom my father had sent what he believed to be a rare and valuable edition of Lucan, which we had found amongst his books. The following is an extract from it:—

"My dear Sir,

"Lucan was first printed in 1469; but although, under these circumstances, Aldus of 1515 may not be highly estimated in bibliographical reputation, still it comes to me with all the value of a unique copy; for I know nobody else who would have so disposed of a book with a perfect indifference to its being worth one hundred pounds or one hundred pence, but with an evident wish that it might turn out to be ranked under the first of these two classes. Most gladly and gratefully therefore shall Lucan, 1515, repose upon my shelves, with the unique distinction which I am proud to attribute to it from its highly-valued donor.

"Ever most truly yours,

"THOMAS GRENVILLE."

In the summer of 1843 we had a visit from Mr Moore, a visit often promised, but never before accomplished. The weather and the place were lovely, and seemed to inspire the charming little poet, who talked and sang in his peculiar fashion, like any nightingale of the Flowery Valley, to the delight of us all. In true poet style, when he departed, he left various articles of his wardrobe scattered about. On my father writing to inform him of this, he sent the following answer:—

"*Sloperton*, 1843.

"My dear Sydney,

"Your lively letter (what else could it be?) was found by me here on my return from Bowood; and with it a shoal of other letters, which it has taken me almost ever since to answer. I began my answer to yours in rhyme, contrasting the recollections I had brought away from you, with the sort of treasures you had supposed me to have left behind. This is part of it:—

"Rev. Sir, having duly received by the post
Your list of the articles missing and lost
By a certain small poet, well known on the road,
Who visited lately your flowery abode;
We have balanced what Hume calls '*the tottle o' the whole*,'
Making all due allowance for what the bard stole;
And hoping th' enclosed will be found quite correct,
Have the honour, Rev. Sir, to be yours with respect.
"Left behind a kid glove, once the half of a pair,
An odd stocking, whose fellow is—Heaven knows where;
And (to match these odd fellows) a couplet sublime,
Wanting nought to complete it but reason and rhyme.
"Such, it seems, are the only small goods you can find,
That this runaway bard in his flight left behind;
But in settling the account, just remember, I pray,
What rich recollections the rogue took away;
What visions for ever of sunny Combe Florey,
Its cradle of hills, where it slumbers in glory,
Its Sydney himself, and the countless bright things
Which his tongue or his pen, from the deep shining springs
Of his wisdom and wit, ever flowingly brings.

"I have not time to recollect any more; besides, I was getting rather out of my depth in those deep shining springs, though not out of yours. Kindest regards to the ladies, not forgetting the pretty Hebe* of the breakfast-table the day I came away.

"Yours ever most truly,
"THOMAS MOORE."

"*Bowood, August, Tuesday* 22, 1843.

"My dear Sydney,

"You said, in your acknowledgment of my late versicles, that you had never been be-rhymed before. This startled me into the recollection that I had myself once before made free with you in that way; but where the evidence was of my presumption, I could not remember. The verses, however, written some three or four years ago, have just turned up, and here they are for you. I forgot, by the by, to tell you that, a day or two after my return from Combe Florey (*I like to write that name*), I was persuaded to get into a gig with Lady Kerry, and let her drive me some miles. Next day I found out that, but a day or two before, it had run away with her!—no bad taste, certainly, in the horse;—but it shows what one gets by consorting with young countesses and frisky ecclesiastics.†

"Yours ever,
"THOMAS MOORE."

. . . . . .

"And still let us laugh, preach the world as it may,
Where the cream of the joke is, the swarm will soon follow;

* Sir Henry Holland's youngest daughter.

† Mr Smith had driven Mr Moore with a somewhat frisky horse. Mr Moore got out of the gig, and walked home.

Heroics are very fine things in their way,
But the laugh, at the long-run, will carry it hollow.

"Yes, Jocus! gay god, whom the Gentiles supplied,
And whose worship not even among Christians declines;
In our senates thou'st languish'd, since Sheridan died,
But Sydney still keeps thee alive in our shrines.

"Rare Sydney! thrice honour'd the stall where he sits,
And be his every honour he deigneth to climb at!
Had England a hierarchy form'd all of wits,
Whom, but Sydney, would England proclaim as its primate?

"And long may he flourish, frank, merry, and brave,
A Horace to feast with, a Pascal* to read!
While he *laughs*, all is safe; but, when Sydney grows grave,
We shall then think the Church is in danger indeed."

About this time the very valuable living of Edmonton fell vacant, by the death of my father's fellow-canon, Mr Tate; and by the rules of the Chapter of St Paul's, it lay with my father either to take it himself or present it to a relation or friend. Remembering the honest intrepidity of his old colleague, who, in spite of poverty and many children, had many years before joined him in a minority of two against the clergy of Yorkshire, under a Tory administration, in favour of Catholic Emancipation, and grieving at the poverty his family would be reduced to by his death, he determined to bestow the living on his eldest son, who had acted as his father's curate, if he found on inquiry that he was fitted for it by his character. He has given a most touching account of his interview with the unhappy widow and her family on this occasion, in a letter to my mother, from which I shall give some extracts.

"*Green Street, October* 23.

"Dearest Kate,

"I meant to have gone to Munden to-day, but am not quite stout, so have postponed my journey there till next Saturday, the 28th. I went over yesterday to the Tates, at Edmonton. The family consists of three delicate daughters, an aunt, the old lady, and her son, then curate of Edmonton; the old lady was in bed. I found there a physician, an old friend of Tate's, attending them from friendship, who had come from London for that purpose. They were in daily expectation of being turned out from house and curacy. . . . I began by inquiring the character of their servant; then turned the conversation upon their affairs, and expressed a hope the Chapter might ultimately do something for them. I then said, 'It is my duty

* "Some parts of the 'Provinciales' may be said to be of the highest order of *jeux d'esprit*."—*Note by Mr Moore.*

to state to you' (they were all assembled) 'that I have given away the living of Edmonton; and have written to our Chapter clerk this morning, to mention the person to whom I have given it; and I must also tell you, that I am sure he will appoint his curate.' (A general silence and dejection.) 'It is a very odd coincidence,' I added, 'that the gentleman I have selected is a namesake of this family; his name is Tate. Have you any relations of that name?' 'No, we have not.' 'And, by a more singular coincidence, his name is Thomas Tate; in short,' I added, 'there is no use in mincing the matter, you are vicar of Edmonton.' They all burst into tears. It flung me also into a great agitation of tears, and I wept and groaned for a long time. Then I rose and said I thought it was very likely to end in their keeping a buggy, at which we all laughed as violently.

"The poor old lady, who was sleeping in a garret because she could not bear to enter into the room lately inhabited by her husband, sent for me and kissed me, sobbing with a thousand emotions. The charitable physician wept too. . . . I never passed so remarkable a morning, nor was more deeply impressed with the sufferings of human life, and never felt more thoroughly the happiness of doing good.

"God bless you!

"SYDNEY SMITH."

On this act becoming known, my father received an address from the principal parishioners of Edmonton, stating that they had intended to address the Dean and Chapter, respectfully soliciting their patronage in favour of the son of their late vicar, and adding: "But what shall we say, Reverend Sir, of that munificent act of liberality on your part, by which the necessity of such a memorial is superseded? Though however that necessity is superseded, we feel, Reverend Sir, bound in gratitude to present to you personally our united thanks, for the great benefit you have bestowed on our parish, and the high gratification you have afforded us." To which my father replied:—

"Gentlemen,

"I am very much pleased by the address you have done me the honour to send me. . . . In the choice of a clergyman for the parish of Edmonton I was actuated by many considerations. I had to consult the character and dignity of the Chapter, which would have been compromised by the nomination of a person merely because he was my friend and relation. I was to find a serious and diligent man, in the prime of life, able and eager to fulfil the burdensome duties of so large a parish; and I was to seek in him those

characters of gentleness and peace which are of such infinite importance to the character of the Church, and the happiness of those who live under the beautiful influence of these qualities. Lastly, I had to show my strong respect for the memory of one of the kindest and best men that ever lived; and to lift up, if I could, from poverty and despair, his widow and his children.

"The address I have the honour to receive from you to-day convinces me that I have succeeded in combining these objects; and makes me really happy in thinking that my conduct has obtained the approbation of so many honourable men, so well acquainted with the circumstances of the case.

"I am, Gentlemen, with great respect,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

I must add a touching little note from his old friend Mrs Marcet, to my mother, on this occasion:—

"What a happy woman you must be, my dear Mrs Smith, to have such a husband! All the world know his talents, but it is not many who know that heart, so overflowing with generous and magnanimous feelings, with tender mercies, and Christian charities. God bless him! . . I will write it, though it makes my hand ache;* it fills my heart with joy, and my eyes with tears.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"J. MARCET."

The following letter was very kindly sent to me by the Bishop of London, from which I give extracts:—

"My dear Lord,

"I am very glad you approve of my choice. Every one of the persons who have pews in his church have concurred in the same sentiment, as I learn from a memorial sent to me to that effect. I never saw a greater scene of distress than when I went down to them; the poor mother ill in bed of a fever, three delicate sisters, a poor and aged aunt, and the curate—all expecting to be turned out of house and curacy, with £100 per annum between them all. The transition from despair to joy was awful; I shall never forget it. . . . Have mercy, my dear Lord, and take £100;† it leaves only £700 per annum to the Vicar of Edmonton and his brothers; this will make W—— Hill equal to Southgate, where the curacy is made up £200 per annum.

"Yours, my dear Lord, very sincerely,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

* Mrs Marcet had sprained her wrist.

† The Bishop of London had wished to divide the living.

It is beautifully said somewhere :—"Happiness is what all men seek; all men have the jewel in their casket, but how few find the key to open it!" The following paragraph, which, I find my mother says, "was cut out of our papers and preserved by Sydney," shows at least that he had not sought for the key quite in vain.

"*Recipe for making every Day Happy.*

"When you rise in the morning, form a resolution to make the day a happy one to a fellow-creature. It is easily done;—a left-off garment to the man who needs it, a kind word to the sorrowful, an encouraging expression to the striving; trifles in themselves light as air will do it, at least for the twenty-four hours; and, if you are young, depend upon it it will tell when you are old; and, if you are old, rest assured it will send you gently and happily down the stream of human time to eternity. By the most simple arithmetical sum, look at the result: you send one person, only one, happily through the day; that is three hundred and sixty-five in the course of the year; and supposing you live forty years only after you commence that course of medicine, you have made 14,600 human beings happy, at all events for a time. Now, worthy reader, is this not simple? It is too short for a sermon, too homely for ethics, and too easily accomplished for you to say, 'I would if I could.'"

I know that my mother thought her husband's life the best comment on these precepts. I see amongst his scattered notes on this subject, "The haunts of happiness are varied, and rather unaccountable; but I have more often seen her among little children, home firesides, and country houses, than anywhere else; at least I think so."

On his return to Combe Florey, in July, he spent a few days at Nuneham, on a visit to his former diocesan, the Archbishop of York. He met there a large and agreeable party; and a discussion arising, amongst other subjects, on hardness of character, my father, at the request of Miss G. Harcourt, wrote the following definition of it.

"*Definition of Hardness of Character.*

"*Hardness* is a want of minute attention to the feelings of others. It does not proceed from malignity or a carelessness of inflicting pain, but from a want of delicate perception of those little things by which pleasure is conferred or pain excited.

"A hard person thinks he has done enough if he does not speak ill of your relations, your children, or your country; and then, with the greatest good-humour and volubility, and with a total inatten-

tion to your individual state and position, gallops over a thousand fine feelings, and leaves in every step the mark of his hoofs upon your heart. Analyse the conversation of a well-bred man who is clear of the besetting sin of hardness; it is a perpetual homage of polite good-nature. He remembers that you are connected with the Church, and he avoids (whatever his opinions may be) the most distant reflections on the Establishment. He knows that you are admired, and he admires you as far as is compatible with good-breeding. He sees that, though young, you are at the head of a great establishment, and he infuses into his manner and conversation that respect which is so pleasing to all who exercise authority. He leaves you in perfect good-humour with yourself, because you perceive how much and how successfully you have been studied.

"In the meantime the gentleman on the other side of you (a highly moral and respectable man) has been crushing little sensibilities, and violating little proprieties, and overlooking little discriminations; and without violating anything which can be called a *rule*, or committing what can be denominated a *fault*, has displeased and dispirited you, from wanting that fine vision which sees little things, and that delicate touch which handles them, and that fine sympathy which the superior moral organisation always bestows.

"So great an evil in society is *hardness*, and that want of perception of the minute circumstances which occasion pleasure or pain."

Towards the end of this year (1843) my father sent a petition to the American Congress, for payment of the debt due to England by the repudiating States.

It was said of Régnault St Jean d'Angely, President of the French Institute, "qu'il avait passé la vie en venant toujours au secours *du plus fort*." The reverse might justly be said of my father: he passed his life in minorities, and in the cause of the oppressed. He says, in speaking of his motives for undertaking the one in question: "I am no enemy to America; I loved and admired honest America when she respected the laws of pounds, shillings, and pence, and I thought the United States the most magnificent picture of human happiness. I meddle now in these matters because I hate fraud; because I pity the misery it has occasioned; because I mourn over the hatred it has excited against free institutions."

This petition and the letters which followed it produced a most extraordinary sensation, and brought upon him much abuse from the American press; though we had reason to believe, from many

sources, that they spoke the feelings of every honourable man in America.

"And all this storm," says the editor of the "Morning Chronicle" of the time, "has been raised by a few words from a *private* English gentleman! Why is it that his words have had such a talismanic effect? It is true, they were words of choice and singular excellence; but no mastery of language or weight of literary reputation could so have moved America, if they did not happen to be employed in the utterance of home truths, which are, or ought to be, sharper than a two-edged sword. We repeat, that the power of these letters lies mainly in the deep moral feeling that pervades them: and one proof of this is, the warm response they have called forth from those in America in whom the moral sense is strong enough to make them speak out."

As one specimen of this, I shall insert a speech or letter of Mr Ticknor's, extracted from the "Boston Semi-weekly Advertiser," and sent to my father by Mr Everett.

"The short and pungent petition to Congress of the Rev. Sydney Smith, in relation to his claim on the state of Pennsylvania, for interest-money due to him, has already excited no little remark among us, and is likely to excite yet more. This is probably one of the effects its author intended it should produce; perhaps it is one of the effects that we ourselves, as honest men and patriots, ought to desire; for the subject of his petition is a grave one, that cannot excite too much discussion in any part of the United States. But we should be careful, for our own sakes, to assume the right tone when speaking of a man like Mr Smith, who only asks to be paid that to which he is as justly entitled as any one of us is entitled to anything he possesses.

"It has therefore appeared to many persons unseemly that the 'Boston Courier' should speak of Mr Smith's petition, to have payment made to him of the interest, which has been solemnly promised on the faith and honour of the State of Pennsylvania, merely as 'impudence, bombast, and impertinence.' The claims of a creditor are not always welcome to his debtor, and, when other means have failed, they are not always set forth by the injured party in the most civil and gracious words; writs and executions, for instance, are not drawn up in terms chosen for the sake of pleasing 'ears polite.' Mr Smith would, no doubt, have much preferred to use the good set terms of these instruments of established authority; and nobody would then have fancied he was doing anything unreasonable, since he would be doing just what everybody else does who cannot in other ways get his rights. But the great and rich State of Pennsylvania, like the other States of our Union, has taken some pains to place herself above the reach of such vulgar

processes for coercing her to be honest. She *cannot* be sued: her creditor therefore is compelled to use his own words, instead of the more stringent words of the law. No doubt Mr Sydney Smith, when doing this, does not present himself with a very cringing air: he uses strong phrases, stronger than we like to hear, stronger than is respectful; but the real difficulty in the case is, that the strongest words he uses are true words; for just so long as the Pennsylvanians refuse to lay a tax of one cent on every hundred dollars of their wealth to pay their honest debts, just so long they may be called 'men who prefer any load of infamy, however great, to any pressure of taxation, however light;' and this is the hardest and sharpest phrase in Mr Smith's petition. To be sure, it would not be easy, on the same subject, to say anything more cutting or more terse; but, after all, the bitterness of the words lies in their truth.

"The 'New York Evening Post' is more severe on Mr Smith than the 'Boston Courier.' His petition is there treated as the 'ravings of one who had been disappointed in reaping that profit from his speculations which he expected and desired;' and because he has told us that we are 'unstable in the very foundations of social life,' the writer in the 'Post' inquires, whether 'the Bible used by the reverend gentleman teaches him that dollars and cents are the very foundation of social life?' Now, it is disagreeable to witness such injustice coupled with such violence of language; the thing is wrong in itself, and it does us much harm. The Rev. Sydney Smith is no more a speculator than every man is who lends money to his neighbour at the regular rate of interest; nor does he rave any more than every man raves, who insists, in round terms, that he will be paid what is plainly and lawfully due to him. Then, too, as to the 'foundations of social life,' the New York assailant of Mr Smith really does not seem to suspect that honesty and good faith are among them, and that all the English clergyman asks of Pennsylvania is to be honest, in the lowest and commonest sense of that reproachful word, which we can no longer, as one would think from the tone of this writer in the 'Post,' bear to have uttered in our presence.

"But let us now look at the matter just as it really stands. The Rev. Sydney Smith, as anybody may learn who will inquire, is a man known throughout Europe for his wit, logic, and the general vigour of his mind. He was, above forty years ago, one of the founders and main supporters of the 'Edinburgh Review;' and he is now one of the most popular and powerful writers of his time, read alike on both sides of the Atlantic. He is an old Whig; and for the sin of maintaining manfully, against all his worldly interests, the cause of free institutions, the cause of Irish emancipation, and

the cause of Parliamentry reform, he was kept low in the Church, as long as the Tories had power; and supported himself and his family, in no small degree, by his pen. He was, in fact, for many years a very poor parson, in a very poor parish in Yorkshire, where he was much loved by his parishioners for his active goodness; taking pains, among other things, to study medicine, in order to be able to practise it gratuitously among them, as there was no physician in their neighbourhood, and they could not afford to send abroad for one. When he was about sixty years old, the Whigs came into office, and gave him a good living. From this, it seems, he made in his old age some savings: and, having confidence in free institutions and American honesty, he invested a part, or the whole, of these savings in Pennsylvania stocks. But his interest there is not paid, and his capital is shrunk to a merely nominal value. He of course complains. He tells us even that we are not honest. We answer, 'you rave,' you are 'impertinent,' you are 'impudent,' you are 'a reverend slanderer.' But what, in the meantime, do honourable men everywhere say better about us? and how comfortably does an American, always before so proud to call himself such, feel, who is now travelling in any part of the world out of his own country! Nay, how do we ourselves feel about our conduct and character in our own secret hearts *at home?*

"One word more. The Rev. Sydney Smith is, after all, only the representative of a very large class of men, chiefly in England, but also to be found scattered more or less over the best portions of the continent of Europe, who now think and talk of the indebted States of America exactly as he does. They are men of moderate property and much intelligence. They have had greater confidence in free institutions than the rich and the powerful around them. They have looked upon us Americans especially with kindness, respect, and cheerful trust; when others, of more worldly consideration than themselves, have looked upon us with aversion and contempt. They have been, in short, our sincere friends; and partly because they were our friends, and believed in us and our forms of government, they have lent us their money to the amount of above a hundred millions of dollars, perhaps more nearly two hundred. And how have we requited their confidence? Mr Smith's petition may inform us. We may learn from it, too, that we must do something to regain for ourselves the decent consideration among mankind which we have forfeited,—and forfeited, too, merely to save ourselves from paying a certain number of 'dollars and cents,' as the writer in the 'Evening Post' would say, which we are quite aware we honestly owe.

"The people of Massachusetts and New England, and indeed the people of the majority of these States, are not called upon to

take to themselves any more of the censures of Mr Smith than a man is obliged to take of the censures that fall on a disgraced community with which he is intimately associated. We may therefore well be thankful, and in some degree proud, that these States have committed no injustice towards their creditors; but while we are thankful for this, we must also be careful not to countenance the dishonest States in their dishonesty, nor to seem eager to rebuke a foreign creditor who comes among us boldly demanding his dues."

But what gratified my father most was a private letter he received shortly after his American letters were written, from his friend Mr Wainwright, giving an account of the arrival of a steamer at New York, with a Sydney Smith on board. Mr Wainwright's letter best states what happened.

"*New York, July* 15, 1844.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"Upon the recent arrival of the 'Great Western,' in the list of passengers published, was *Sydney Smith!* The next morning the newspapers trumpeted throughout the land that 'the founder of the Edinburgh Review,' 'the distinguished Prebendary of St Paul's,' 'the man of a thousand of the happiest sayings of the age,' and, above all, 'the scourge of repudiating Pennsylvania,' had *actually* arrived in this remote hemisphere! What was to be done? Should he be tarred and feathered, or lynched? Quite the contrary! He was to be *fêted*, rejoiced in, and even Pennsylvania was to meet him with cordial salutations. A hundred dinners were arranged at the moment, and the guests selected. When, lo! he who had caused this great excitement turned out to be some humble New York trader, of whom nobody had ever heard before! Now he might have signed himself S. Smith, and all would have been well; it would have passed for Samuel, Simeon, or Shearjashub. But in an evil hour he had the vanity or presumption to write in full, and hence have come upon us disappointments without end. As a proper reparation, we must insist upon his applying to the Legislature to have an agnomen, with which he has no business, changed.

"Among the disappointed were numbers of my congregation, who, seeing, a very dignified clerical-looking stranger in my pew at St John's, the day after the 'Western' arrived, jumped at the conclusion, and stared a worthy ecclesiastic almost out of countenance as he went out of church; and his only consolation is, that he came nearer to passing for a wit than he ever did before, or ever will again. But the most disappointed person was your old schoolmate, and my excellent friend, Moore; who, being confined to the house, and hearing the Sunday report from his family, was

momentarily expecting, for three hours after service, to take his Winchester friend by the hand.

"Now, would it be possible for you to give us the only solace for these disappointments? The ships and steamers are admirable, the passage in summer and autumn by no means arduous, the greeting awaiting you the heartiest possible, and the country and people—you will judge of them when you come. In New York you will find a home prepared in my house; and to show you that you will not want others in other places, I send you a letter which I received from the Bishop of New Jersey, from his beautiful place, Riverside.

"Most truly your obedient friend and servant,

"J. M. WAINWRIGHT."

From the Bishop of New Jersey.

"*Riverside, July* 8, 1844.

"My dear Wainwright,

"I notice the arrival of the Rev. Sydney Smith by the 'Great Western.' I desire to offer him the hospitality of Riverside. You have been promising me a visit; I propose to you that you invite him to come on with you on Monday or Tuesday of next week, as may be most agreeable to you. I name that time, as we propose a visit to Niagara, Toronto, &c., on the following week. Let me hear from you as soon as convenient. I observe that your daughter has sailed for Europe; we follow her with our best wishes.

"With best love to all yours, ever your affectionate brother,

"G. W. DOANE."

Though my father made his own claims the plea for undertaking this cause, he was now become, through private sources, a rich man, and what he lost was a mere trifle. But during the excitement his letters caused, it was curious that, whilst abuse flowed in from the other side of the Atlantic by every packet, which he used to read to us at breakfast with great good-humour, on this side he was regarded as the lion's mouth at Venice. He writes on one occasion, evidently much amused:—

"Dear Van de Weyer,

"Many thanks; they seem puzzled with the whole thing, and cannot make me out. What a mistake, to depreciate my beauty and my orthodoxy!

"Ever yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Letter after letter poured in by every post, of gratitude, encourage-

ment, thanks, tales of losses and miseries occasioned by this want of faith in the repudiating States, as if these aggrieved persons looked upon him as the champion of public faith throughout Christendom.

I ought, in justice, to mention, that together with the abuse, there came frequently from America little offerings, such as apples, cheese, &c., from unknown individuals, unwilling, as they said, to share the public shame, and offering their quota towards the payment of the Pennsylvanian debt.

I have, in the first part of this Memoir, given some few extracts, to show the deep impression he then produced in the pulpit; I shall now give a letter written on hearing him in his old age at St Paul's, by a medical man, of eminence in his profession.

"My dear Mr Smith,

"Not being 'a brown man of Pennsylvania,' I pay my just debts; and I offer to you the tribute of my sincere thanks for one of the most impressive and eloquent discourses, delivered yesterday at St Paul's, that it has ever fallen to my lot to hear. I wish I could read it. There is a magic in your name, which, if it was published, would incite everybody to read it, and no one is too good or too bad not to derive profit from such an appeal to his reason and his conscience. To pass by your merits of style and elocution,—peculiar, and beyond my praise,—the simple, straightforward method of treating your subject, delighted me. It is a rare and refreshing gratification to listen, in these times of discord and strife on matters of faith, to a preacher whose improvement of his text is not encumbered by references to historical or traditional details; and whose style, clear, logical, and fervid, carries with him the reason as well as the feeling of his audience, by making their intellects a party to their conviction. The mystical phraseology of scriptural preachers (so called) always appears to me a hindrance, rather than a help to serious piety; and I should hail the day of salvation for the Church, not of this nor of that denomination, but of Christ, when such sermons were heard in every cathedral throughout the country, as that which you delivered in the metropolitan last Sunday; which, I will undertake to assert, no hearer did not feel to be a spiritual gain and encouragement."

Another short sketch, lately sent me by my friend Mrs Austin, I shall also insert; giving her impressions on hearing my father for the first time preach in St Paul's. She went there at his invitation,

in consequence of a previous conversation, in which Mrs Austin, after expressing her surprise at the feeble effect generally produced in the pulpit, attributed it in part to the vague generalities to which preachers too often confined themselves. Standing there, as they do, with the enormous advantage of duty, reason, and religion commanding them to speak, she thought that they ought to make each moral evil which afflicts society the object of special and energetic attack.

"For example," she said, "why do you not preach a sermon against the love of war?" My father, who most warmly coincided with these feelings against war, as may be seen in many of his letters, exclaimed, "You are right; it shall be done; come and hear me." She went, and shall tell her own impressions:

"I was immediately struck, as I have frequently been since, at the peculiar character and aspect of the congregation at St Paul's; and at the remarkable sympathy that appeared to exist between the pastor and his flock. The choir was densely filled, yet it would have been difficult to detect in the crowd any of those diversities of station which are usually but too strongly marked in a London church. It appeared one homogeneous body of sedate, earnest, respectable citizens and their families,—no obtrusive air of fashion, no painful look of poverty.

"I must confess that I went to hear Mr Smith preach, with some misgiving as to the effect which that well-known face and voice, ever associated with wit and mirth, might have upon me, even in the sacred place. Never were misgivings more quickly and entirely dissipated. The moment he appeared in the pulpit, all the weight of his duty, all the authority of his office, were written on his countenance; and without a particle of affectation (of which he was incapable), his whole demeanour bespoke the gravity of his purpose.* Perhaps indeed it was the more striking to one who had till then only seen him delighting society by his gay and overflowing wit. As soon as he began to speak, the whole choir, upon which I looked down, exhibited one mass of upraised, attentive, thoughtful faces. It seemed as if his deep, earnest tones were caught with silent eagerness; and I could not but feel that the perfect good sense, the expansive benevolence, the plain exposition of Christian duty, which fell from his lips, found a soil well fitted to receive it. His hearers looked like men who came prepared 'to mark,' and able 'inwardly to digest,' the truths and the counsels he so clearly and emphatically placed before them. I remember

* I cannot resist adding here how often and how strongly I have felt this sudden and impressive change in my father. On entering the pulpit, the calm dignity of his eye, mien, and voice, made one feel that he was indeed, and felt himself to be, "the pastor standing between our God and His people," to teach His laws, to declare His judgments, and proclaim His mercies.

no religious service which ever appeared to me more solemn, more impressive, or more calculated to bear its appropriate fruit,—the subjugation of fierce and restless passions, and the culture of a just, humane, and Christian temper."

This winter Miss Edgeworth visited London for the last time. During her visit she saw much of my father; and her talents, as well as her love and thorough knowledge of Ireland, made her conversation peculiarly agreeable to him. I wish I had kept some notes of these conversations, several of which took place at my house, and which were very remarkable; but I have only a characteristic and amusing letter she wrote to me soon after her return home, from which the following is an extract:—

"I have not the absurd presumption to think your father would leave London or Combe Florey, for Ireland, *voluntarily;* but I wish some Irish bishopric were forced upon him, and that his own sense of national charity and humanity would forbid him to refuse. Then, obliged to reside amongst us, he would see, in the twinkling of an eye (such an eye as his), all our manifold grievances up and down the country. One word, one *bon mot* of his, would do more for us, I guess, than Mr ——'s four hundred pages, and all the like, with which we have been bored. One letter from Sydney Smith on the affairs of Ireland, with his *name* to it, and after having *been there*, would do more for us than his letters did for America and England;—a bold assertion, you will say, and so it is; but I *calculate* that Pat is a far better subject for wit than Jonathan; it only plays round Jonathan's head, but it goes to Pat's heart,—to the very bottom of his heart, where he loves it; and he don't care whether it is for or against him, so that it is *real* wit and fun. Now Pat would dote upon your father, and kiss the rod with all his soul, he would,—the lash just lifted,—when he'd see the laugh on the face, the kind smile, that would tell him it was all for his good.

"Your father would lead Pat (for he'd never drive him) to the world's end, and maybe to common sense at the end,—might open his eyes to the true state of things and persons, and cause him to *ax* himself how it comes that, if he be so distressed by the Sassenach landlords that he can't keep soul and body together, nor one farthing for the wife and children, after paying the *rint* for the land, still and nevertheless he can pay King Dan's rint, *aisy*,—thousands of pounds, not for lands or potatoes, but just for castles in the air. Methinks I hear Pat saying the words, and see him jump to the conclusion, that maybe the *gintleman*, his reverence,

that '*has the way with him*,'* might be the man after all to do them all the good in life, and asking nothing at all from them. 'Better, sure, than Dan, after all! and we will follow him through thick and thin. Why no? What though he is his reverence, the Church, that is our *cleargy*, won't object to him; for he was never an inimy any way, but always for paying them off handsome, and fools if they don't take it now. So down with King Dan, for he's no good! and up with Sydney—he's the *man*, king of *glory!*'

"But, visions of glory, and of *good* better than glory, spare my longing sight! else I shall never come to an end of this *note*. *Note* indeed! I beg your pardon.

"Yours affectionately,

"MARIA EDGEWORTH."

Miss Edgeworth says, in one of her letters to her sister, after one of the evenings spent in my father's society:—"Delightful, I need not say; but to attempt to Boswell Sydney Smith's conversations would be out-Boswelling Boswell indeed." I have felt the truth of this observation most strongly in writing these Memoirs, and should have flung down my pen in despair had I not had brighter and better, though easier, things to tell of my father than the effusions of his wit.

I shall now give a short correspondence between my father and Sir Robert Peel, as it does equal honour to both:—

"*May* 5, 1844.

"Sir,

"I am informed there will be a vacancy in July of a clerkship in the Record Office, in that department of it over which Mr Hardy, I believe, presides. There is a family of the name of ——, residing in ——, who have formerly been in affluence, but have fallen with the fall of the West Indies. The mother and daughter are teaching music. The son is an excellent lad, understanding and speaking French and German, and is a humble candidate for this situation of Clerk of the Records, worth about eighty pounds per annum. Mr Hardy, a very old friend of the family, is very desirous of getting the young man into his office.

* This expression, "*that has the way with him*," refers to a conversation my father had with Dr Doyle, at a time he was anxious to learn as far as possible what effect the measures he was proposing would have upon the Catholics. He proposed that Government should pay the Catholic priests. "They would not take it," said Dr Doyle. "Do you mean to say, *that if every priest in Ireland received to-morrow morning a Government letter with a hundred pounds*, FIRST QUARTER *of their year's income*, that they would refuse it?" "Ah, Mr Smith," said Dr Doyle, "you've such a way of putting things!"

A better family does not exist, or one fighting up more bravely against adversity. The mother has been repeatedly to me, to beg I would state these things to you. I stated to her that I had so little the honour of your acquaintance, that, though I had met you, I should hardly presume to bow to you in the street. But the poor lady said I had evidence to give, if I had not influence to use; and at last I consented to do what I am doing. I beg therefore to observe, I am not asking anything of you (no man has less right to do so); I am merely stating facts to you respecting an office of which you have the disposal. I have no other acquaintance with the family than through their misfortunes, borne with such unshaken constancy.

"I beg you will not give yourself the trouble to answer this letter. If my evidence induces you to make any inquiries about the young lad, that will be the best answer. If not, I shall attribute it to some of the innumerable obstacles which prevent a person in your situation from giving way to the impulses of compassion and good-nature.

"I have the honour to be, &c.,
"SYDNEY SMITH."

"*Whitehall, May* 6, 1844.

"Sir,

"I do not recollect that I ever made a promise of an appointment not actually vacant. I try to defer as long as possible the evil day which brings to me the invidious duty of selecting one from a hundred candidates, and disappointment to ninety-nine of them.

"But I am *so* sure that, when the particular vacancy mentioned in your letter shall occur, there will be no claim which it will give me greater satisfaction to comply with, than one brought under my notice by you, from such kind and benevolent motives as those which *alone* would induce you to write to me, that I do not hesitate a moment in making an exception from my general rule, and in at once giving you a promise, either that Mr —— shall have the appointment you name, or one equally eligible; and not at a more distant period, if possible.

"All the return I shall ask from you is the privilege of renewing, when we meet, the honour of your acquaintance.

"I am, Sir, with sincere esteem,
"Your faithful servant,
"ROBERT PEEL."

The office was granted, and my father had the satisfaction to hear that the young man was found most efficient in it. He shortly

after sent Sir Robert Peel his works, with the "sincere respect and esteem of the author" written on the title-page. He received the following answer:—

"*Whitehall.*

"Dear Sir,

"Though you have not opened to me any *new* source of interest or instruction, I thank you sincerely for the volumes you have sent me, and for the few words in the first page which put on record my *title to them.*

"They are duplicates of a work which has been in my possession since the first day of its publication. I am very familiar with its contents; and have no feeling connected with my general recollection of them but those to which the combination of good sense, wit, and genius naturally give rise.

"Believe me, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

"ROBERT PEEL."

The following are a few notes from the journal of a lady, since distinguished, both by her talents and the use she has made of them, who formed the acquaintance of my father many years ago. She gave them to me, adding, prettily, the pleasure it gave her to be able, by so doing, to throw one more stone on my father's cairn. With these I have mingled some few anecdotes from other sources.

"If I recollect right, it was about the year 1812 that I first had the gratification to meet Mr Sydney Smith,—it was at the house of Mr Josiah Wedgewood. He arrived about the middle of the day, with his wife and children. He entered, and in an instant made everybody feel at their ease, and infused a portion of his own animation into all around him. I remember him standing with his back to the fire, or leaning over the back of his chair, conversing with us for several hours. The conversation turned, amongst other things, on politics. 'I consider the Whigs as shipwrecked for ever; no chance of my being made even a dean; so I have laid down my plan of life. I will make myself, if not as rich as others, at least as rich and happy as an honest man can be.' The next morning he took a long walk over the hills with us; and most agreeable he was, giving out his mind with a variety and abundance of ideas which delighted us, and showed how little need he had of external excitement to call forth his powers of wit and wisdom. He was at this time stout-made, his face handsome, with that pale *embonpoint* which always distinguished him, and his remarkable deep dark eye, which I think retained its character

even to the last;—indeed, I should say, never was the external appearance of any man less altered by years than his. When speaking of the impression made by his manner and appearance, his delightful laugh must not be forgotten,—so genuine, so full of hearty enjoyment, that it was a source of gaiety only to hear it. It was his custom to stroll about the room in which we were sitting, and which was lined with books, taking down one lot after another, sometimes reading or quoting aloud, sometimes discussing any subject that arose. He took down a sort of record of those men who had lived to a great age. 'A record of little value,' said Mrs W., 'as to live longer than other people can hardly be the desire of any one.' 'It is not so much the longevity,' he answered, 'that is valued, as that original build and constitution, that condition of health and habit of life, which not only leads to longevity, but makes life enjoyable whilst it lasts, that renders the subject interesting and worth inquiry.'

"'I think a good life of Erasmus much wanted; the mild conciliating temper of the subject would make it no unfit theme for a lady's pen.'

"'You must preach, Mr Smith,' said Mrs W. (it was Saturday.) 'We must go and try the pulpit, then,' said he, 'to see if it suits me.' So to the church we walked; and how he amused us by his droll way of trying the pulpit, as he called it;—his criticisms on the little old-fashioned sounding-board, which seemed ready to fall on his head, and which, he said, would infallibly extinguish him! 'I can't bear,' said he, 'to be imprisoned in the true orthodox way in my pulpit, with my head just peeping above the desk. I like to look down upon my congregation,—to fire into them. The common people say I am a *bould preacher*, for I like to have my arms free, and to thump the pulpit. A singular *contretemps* happened to me once, when, to effect this, I had ordered the clerk to pile up some hassocks for me to stand on. My text was, 'We are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' I had scarcely uttered these words, and was preparing to illustrate them, when I did so practically, and in a way I had not at all anticipated. My fabric of hassocks suddenly gave way: down I fell, and with difficulty prevented myself from being precipitated into the arms of my congregation; who, I must say, behaved very well, and recovered their gravity sooner than I could have expected. But my adventure was not so bad as that of a friend of mine. A tame raven had got into the church; no sooner did he begin his sermon, than the raven, in high caw, rushed at his book, seized it in his bill, and had almost effected his escape with it, before the astonished preacher was aware of his danger. He caught at it, however;—the bird pulled and sawed,

he tugged and scolded; the congregation were to a man with the bird, who fought valiantly for his prize; and it was not till after a severe struggle, in which victory remained for a long time doubtful, that my friend rescued his sermon and banished his enemy, amidst the roars of laughter of his congregation.'

"I have never seen any one who approached Sydney Smith in power of thought, united with the greatest candour. He was one who saw subjects on all sides from the height of an elevated genius. His reputation has been much founded on his powers of entertaining, which are very great, indeed unrivalled; yet I prefer his serious conversation. One morning, seeing me lounging in the library, looking at idle books, he took down 'Berkeley on Vision,' and advised me to read it, as excessively ingenious and well worth making myself acquainted with.

"'Live,' said he, 'always in the best company when you read. No one in youth thinks on the value of time. Do you ever reflect how you pass your life? If you live to seventy-two, which I hope you may, your life is spent in the following manner:—An hour a day is three years; this makes twenty-seven years sleeping,—nine years dressing,—nine years at table,—six years playing with children,—nine years walking, drawing, and visiting,—six years shopping,—and three years quarrelling.' I did not then perhaps value these marks of interest in the progress of a young girl's mind as I have learned to do since.

"In 1816 I had again the happiness to pass a few days with Mr Smith in the same family, and we found him, if possible, still more delightful than before: he would sit for hours with us by the fire, discoursing and making us all wiser and better, and of course most proud and happy, by his notice. One day he took a walk by the canal; he put a case of morality:—a man digging a canal discovers some limestone-rock, waits till the land comes into the market, purchases it, and makes a great deal of money by his discovery. I doubted whether the man was right; he maintained the man had a right to profit by his own discovery. The discussion lasted long, but I only recollect the patience he had with my arguments; and though he did not succeed in converting me to his opinion at that time, he did not make me feel afraid to own it to him.

"'Keep as much as possible in the grand and common road of life; patent educations or habits seldom succeed. Depend upon it, men set more value on the cultivated minds than on the accomplishments of women, which they are rarely able to appreciate. It is a common error, but it is an error, that literature unfits women for the everyday business of life. It is not so with men: you see those of the most cultivated minds constantly devoting their time

and attention to the most homely objects. Literature gives women a real and proper weight in society, but then they must use it with discretion; if the stocking is *blue*, the petticoat must be *long*, as my friend Jeffrey says; the want of this has furnished food for ridicule in all ages.'

"'Never give way to melancholy; resist it steadily, for the habit will encroach. I once gave a lady two-and-twenty recipes against melancholy: one was a bright fire; another, to remember all the pleasant things said to and of her; another, to keep a box of sugar-plums on the chimneypiece, and a kettle simmering on the hob.' I thought this mere trifling at the moment, but have in after-life discovered how true it is that these little pleasures often banish melancholy better than higher and more exalted objects; and that no means ought to be thought too trifling which can oppose it either in ourselves or others.

"'Industry! you may do anything with industry. A friend of mine has mastered Greek, Latin, mathematics, and music, in an extraordinary degree, together with all the *ologies;* and yet without any remarkable abilities, by industry alone.'

"'The law is decidedly the best profession for a young man, if he has anything in him. In the Church a man is thrown into life with his hands tied, and bid to swim; he does well if he keeps his head above water. But then in the law he must have a stout heart and an iron digestion, and must be regular as the town clock, or he may as well retire. Attorneys expect in a lawyer the constancy of the turtle-dove.'

"'Oh! I am happy to see all who will visit me; I have lived twenty years in the country, and have never met a bore.'

"Some one said it was foolhardy in General Fitzpatrick to insist upon going up alone in the balloon, when it was found there was not force to carry up two. 'No,' he said, 'there is always something sublime in sacrificing to great principles; his profession was courage.'

"Many years after, I met him at the house of a relation in London. He called in on his way from some dinner-party or other; he was in high spirits, and never, I think, did such a torrent of wit, fun, nonsense, pointed remark, just observation, and happy illustration, flow pell-mell from the lips of a man. That is the only time in my life that I ever saw him in what is called full force, and it made an impression on me which I can never forget.

"I saw him again after the appearance of my first book. How kind he was! how happy and polite were the things he said upon the occasion! How few have the art to do such things so well! He made me sit by him, and paid me the refined compliment of letting me feel that he thought my mind worth inquiring into.

After this I saw him only as one of the general circle, collected around him in a London drawing-room, where he kept up the ball of conversation by his irresistible and inexhaustible fun and fancy; but I still, as in early life, continued to prefer his serious conversation,—his *wisdom* to his *wit*."

CHAPTER XI.

Pamphlet on Ballot—Fragment on Irish Church—Letter from Lord Murray—Lines Written on Receiving Garden-Chair—Lines by Lady Carlisle—Christens Child—Sketch of Life and Conversation at Combe Florey—Advice to Parishioners—Conversation—Medicines for the Poor—Saves Servant's Life—Fallacies—Studies—Recipe for Salad—Letter of Marion de Lorme—Imitation of Sir James Mackintosh—Close of the Day.

AFTER this period, the only things he wrote were a short pamphlet on the ballot, which went through many editions, and had much success; and the Fragment on Ireland, which he left behind, and which my mother published after his death; showing that he died as he had lived, earnest in the cause of religious toleration and the amelioration of Ireland, and though he did not live to see all he wished in Ireland accomplished, yet, as Johnson says, "He who is cut off in the execution of an honest undertaking, has at least the honour of falling in his rank, and has fought the battle, though he missed the victory."

In the autumn, hearing that his friend Mr Van de Weyer and his family were coming into the west, my father sent him the following note:—

"*October* 1843.

"Health to the greatest of diplomatists, and, to the Belgian kingdom, trade, glory, and peace! You must not pass this way without visiting Combe Florey; we shall expect you on the 9th, we dine at seven,—Madame Van de Weyer, you, and the little ambassador. We are six miles from Taunton, and Taunton is an hour and a half from Bristol. If you write to Sweet's Hotel, they will have horses ready for you, and the people know the way to my house. Pray write a line to say whether we may expect you; we shall be delighted to see you, and truly mortified to miss you.

"Yours ever very truly,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

They came and spent a day or two with us; days, alas! of incessant rain, putting the charms of the little parsonage to the severest trial. But if it was dark and gloomy without, it was all gaiety and sunshine within; for our guests came disposed to be

pleased with everything they found, and the intercourse of two such remarkable men as Mr Van de Weyer and my father, both loving to exercise their minds on grave and important subjects, and both possessing such a fund of knowledge, wit, anecdote, and clever nonsense, to intermingle with them, made one quite forget the passage of time, and the visit seemed over almost as soon as begun. They left us on the most lovely morning, when Combe Florey had put on her gayest and freshest garb; and carried away, I trust, as agreeable impressions as they left behind. In the evening of the same day on which they left us arrived Mr Van de Weyer's secretary, bearing a summons to Windsor, which, owing to Mr Van de Weyer's movements, had remained some days unnoticed, and it became necessary to follow him to Bowood immediately. But as Mr De la P—— could not arrive till one or two in the morning, my father thought Madame Van de Weyer might be much alarmed by suddenly hearing, in the middle of the night, that a messenger had arrived *from home*, and it was agreed that Mr De la P—— should send in the following note, to set their minds at ease.

"Dear Van de Weyer,

"Long live the Belgic lion! long may he roar over the tiger of France! You are wanted at Windsor. De la P—— is below. The young ambassador and all the children, and all the grandpapas, are quite well. There is an air of piety in De la P—— that is very agreeable to me.

"Ever yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH.

"Get up immediately."

And he wrote afterwards more at length, to explain, as he says, his share in the transaction.

"Dear Van de Weyer,

"Let me explain my share in the proceedings. Between five and six o'clock appeared in a fly a grave person, who denominated himself Octave De la P——, in search of you. I concluded, by the solemnity of his aspect, that he was come to announce the last days of the Belgian monarchy. On the contrary, it was to carry you off to the Castle at Windsor. He could not go from hence, seeing the time of his arrival, till the eleven o'clock train; and as he was resolute to have you, and I believe Madame also, in London by six o'clock to-morrow, we agreed that nothing remained but to proceed to Chippenham in the train, to extract you from Bowood, and to convey you to the metropolis. I told him he would be most pro-

bably shot at Bowood by the watchman; but he declared that his papers were all in order, and to die in the performance of his duty was a glorious death for a Belgian. I wrote a jocular note to send up to your bedside, that you might not be alarmed about your children.

"If Octave De la P—— has perished in the invasion of Bowood, I certify that he died with the deepest admiration of the ever-memorable Belgic revolution.

"Yours very truly,
"SYDNEY SMITH."

"*October 12th*, 1843."

It was about this period that Lord Jeffrey, having determined to publish a collection of his contributions to the Edinburgh Review, as many of the early contributors had already done, did my father the honour to dedicate them to him, and, by a few words in it, confirmed my father's account of the origin of the Edinburgh Review. I have heard my father say that there was hardly any event in the whole course of his life that had gratified him more deeply than this dedication from his old friend, Lord Jeffrey.

As I am anxious to make this sketch of my father as complete as possible, I shall here insert a few extracts from a letter, containing his recollections of him, written at my request by Lord Murray; who speaks not only with the authority of his own high character, but of early acquaintance, and an unbroken friendship of half a century.

"Sydney's acute and almost intuitive perception of character made him at once detect whatever was fictitious or assumed; but though this never escaped his keen observation, he was, I firmly believe, more severe towards himself than he was ever towards any other person. His disgust at hypocrisy made him so anxious to avoid the semblance of any attempt to appear better than he was, that he did not always do himself justice. Many, I should say most, of his just or benevolent actions were only known to his most intimate friends, and that accidently.* The goodness of his heart was only revealed by his acts.

"He was so free and open in discourse, that he gave all manner of advantage to those who were disposed to distrust a person overflowing in genial wit and humour.

"Though Sydney Smith could not avoid being conscious of his great powers of writing and speaking, I firmly believe that his estimate of himself and of his own character were truly humble.

* Many as I have told, how many more I have been obliged to suppress, from reasons easily understood!—*Author.*

He was ready to acknowledge the superiority of persons whose abilities were inferior to his own. He claimed little more for himself than practical common sense; but though this was all he claimed, he could not help clothing his sound sense with language which was beautiful, and at the same time more witty and humourous than that of other men. Yet, putting himself lower in the scale, I believe, than he had a fair right to be, he never acquiesced in any opinions in which he did not agree, though coming from the highest station, either secular or clerical. The higher they were, the more he considered it his duty to discuss and examine the opinions they proclaimed to the public. In doing so he felt he was vindicating the rights of the humblest curate in the Church, or defending those who could not defend themselves from the attacks of men in high stations, who often made them in places where they could not be otherwise refuted.

"Whether he did not render a greater service to the public and to his profession by this intrepid conduct, than he could have done by the most respectful and submissive silence, it is for others to determine; but his fearless assertion of what he conceived to be the right, is perfectly consistent with the most modest estimate of his own merits.

"Sydney Smith thought it right and honest to act openly, and avow whatever he wrote, without regard to any personal consequence that might result to himself. There are some men who, if a serious truth is to be supported or enforced, insist that every argument or illustration should be equally solemn and grave. They forget that a person of Sydney Smith's powers would be but half an ally if he did not employ the wit and humour with which he was endowed to enforce truth or expose pretension. Such men would prefer the dullest argument to the most withering and convincing exposure of a fallacy.

"A foreigner, on one occasion, indulging in sceptical doubts of the existence of an overruling Providence in his presence, Sydney, who had observed him evidently well satisfied with his repast, said, 'You must admit there is great genius and thought in that dish.' 'Admirable!' he replied; 'nothing can be better.' 'May I then ask, are you prepared to deny the existence of the cook?' Many anecdotes equally characteristic might be furnished by his old friends, but I fear to repeat what you may have already been told, and have merely hinted at some traits of Sydney's character known only to his most intimate friends."

The following is an extract from some lines written on receiving the present of my father's garden-chair, after his death, from the Rector of Combe Florey, by a friend and neighbour:—

"Thanks for thy gift! 'twill ofttimes bring to mind
A friend who was the friend of human kind;
A man who had no equal amongst men,
Whene'er he chose to wield the moral pen.
For wit, truth, genius, courage, all conspired
To make (and made at last) a sage inspired,
Whom wise men loved, and even wits admired.

"Whate'er was true, he loved; but all pretence,
Pride without merit, learning without sense,
Small niggard piety, which deals in tracts,
And substitutes cant words for Christian acts,
He hated. And most holy war did wage
With each Tartuffe, who shamed our English stage.

"Peace to his spirit! Many a year will run
Into oblivion ere another sun
Like his will rise and lend the world its light.
Honour to him! to thee thanks, and good-night!"

I find some lines in a letter from Lady Carlisle (one of the kindest and warmest of my father's friends) to my mother, written soon after his death, on passing within sight of Foston. They have been carefully preserved by my mother; and though meant for no eye but hers, my father so valued any proof of Lady Carlisle's regard, that I must not omit them here:—

"Is that the roof, to friendship dear,
Where Genius once with matchless ray,
Illumined all within its sphere,
And all was brilliant, all was gay?

"Yes! there the joyous laugh was raised,
And converse held with social glee.
Sydney, by wits and sages praised,
Shall still be loved and mourn'd by me."

I might, to these little tributes of affection which I have already given, add such a list of mourners for his loss (whose letters have all been preserved by my poor mother*), as would claim respect for any life, and do honour to any grave. But if I have not already succeeded in showing by his actions how worthy he was to be respected in life and to be mourned in death, I fear I shall derive little aid even from such names, and might run the risk of wearying my readers. I will therefore go on with what little remains to tell of my narrative.

My father "was sitting at breakfast one morning in the library

* After my father's death, it was the great comfort and occupation of my mother's life to collect and arrange my father's letters and papers, for the purpose of this Memoir, and her labours have contributed not a little towards its accomplishment. In one of her letters to me, my mother says, "You know the great occupation of my life has been to collect materials for some future memorial of my noble-hearted husband." And again, "Time goes rapidly on; I tremble at each day's delay. To have this matter unsettled is the only thing that makes death terrible."

at Combe Florey," said Mrs Marcet, who was staying with us, "when a poor woman came, begging him to christen a new-born infant, without loss of time, as she thought it was dying. Mr Smith instantly quitted the breakfast-table for this purpose, and went off to her cottage. On his return, we inquired in what state he had left the poor babe. 'Why,' said he, 'I first gave it a dose of castor-oil, and then I christened it; so now the poor child is ready for either world.'"

I long to give some sketch of these breakfasts, and the mode of life at Combe Florey, where there were often assembled guests that would have made any table agreeable anywhere; but it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of the beauty, gaiety, and happiness of the scene in which they took place, or the charm that he infused into the society assembled round his breakfast-table. The room, an oblong, was, as I have already described, surrounded on three sides by books, and ended in a bay-window opening into the garden; not brown, dark, dull-looking volumes, but all in the brightest bindings; for he carried his system of furnishing for gaiety even to the dress of his books.

He would come down into this long, low room in the morning like a giant "refreshed to run his course," bright and happy as the scene around him. "Thank God for Combe Florey!" he would exclaim, throwing himself into his red arm-chair, and looking round; "I feel like a bridegroom in the honeymoon." And in truth I doubt if ever bridegroom felt so joyous, or at least made others feel so joyous, as he did on these occasions. "Ring the bell, Saba;" the usual refrain, by the by, in every pause, for he contrived to keep everybody actively employed around him, and nobody ever objected to be so employed. "Ring the bell, Saba." Enter the servant, D——. "D——, glorify the room."* This meant that the three Venetian windows of the bay were to be flung open, displaying the garden on every side, and letting in a blaze of sunshine and flowers. D—— glorifies the room with the utmost gravity, and departs. "You would not believe it," he said, "to look at him now, but D—— is a reformed Quaker. Yes, he quaked, or did quake; his brother quakes still; but D—— is now thoroughly orthodox. I should not like to be a Dissenter in his way; he is to be one of my vergers at St Paul's some day. Lady B—— calls them my virgins. She asked me the other day, 'Pray, Mr Smith, is it true that you walk down St Paul's with three virgins holding silver pokers before

* On reading this passage to two very sensible persons, I was advised to omit this expression, as it might give offence. At first I did so, but on reflection I am inclined to say, with our old English motto, "Honi soit qui mal y pense!" In my father's mouth it meant only "Let in the glorious light and the beautiful world;" and instead of anything irreverent, his heart was overflowing with gratitude and happiness, and he thanked God with his whole heart for the beautiful world in which He had placed him.

you?' I shook my head, and looked very grave, and bid her come and see. Some enemy of the Church, some Dissenter, had clearly been misleading her."

"There, now," sitting down at the breakfast-table, "take a lesson of economy. You never breakfasted in a parsonage before, did you? There, you see, my china is all white, so if broken can always be renewed; the same with my plates at dinner: did you observe my plates? every one a different pattern, some of them *sweet articles;* it was a pleasure to dine upon such a plate as I had last night. It is true, Mrs Sydney, who is a great herald, is shocked because some of them have the arms of a royal duke or a knight of the garter on them, but that does not signify to me. My plan is to go into a china-shop and bid them show me every plate they have which does not cost more than half-a-crown: you see the result."

"I think breakfasts so pleasant because no one is conceited before one o'clock."

Mrs Marcet admired his ham. "Oh," said he, "our hams are the only true hams; yours are Shems and Japheths."

Some one, speaking of the character and writings of Mr ——: "Yes, I have the greatest possible respect for him; but from his feeble voice, he always reminds me of a liberal blue-bottle fly. He gets his head down and his hand on your button, and pours into you an uninterrupted stream of Whiggism in a low buzz. I have known him intimately, and conversed constantly with him for the last thirty years, and give him credit for the most enlightened mind, and a genuine love of public virtue; but I can safely say that during that period I have never heard one single syllable he has uttered."

Mrs Marcet complaining she could not sleep: "I can furnish you" he said, "with a perfect soporific. I have published two volumes of sermons; take them to bed with you. I recommended them once to Blanco White, and before the third page he was fast."

"This is the only sensible spring I remember (1840): it is a real March of intellect."

"If I were to select a figure to go through life with, it should be Windham's figure and Canning's face."

"I make it a rule to endure no evil that can be remedied. D—— laughs at me for my inventions and contrivances; but what is the consequence of his indolence? I go to his house and find him sitting in his arm-chair, waging war against human existence, and a prey to blue-devils; and all because his pens won't write, his ink won't mark, his sealing-wax won't melt, his fires won't burn, his blinds won't pull up or down, and his windows and doors won't open and shut,—evils which a nail, a drop of water, or five minutes' exertion would have remedied."

On seeing a very foolish letter by an acquaintance in the newspapers: "There! read that! what incredible folly! You pity a man who is lame or blind, but you never pity him for being a fool, which is often a much greater misfortune."

Miss Fox was mentioned, who was at that time at Bowood: "Oh, she is perfection; she always gives me the idea of an aged angel."

Some one speaking of the utility of a measure, and quoting ——'s opinion: "Yes, he is of the Utilitarian school. That man is so hard you might drive a broad-wheeled waggon over him, and it would produce no impression; if you were to bore holes in him with a gimlet, I am convinced sawdust would come out of him. That school treats mankind as if they were mere machines; the feelings or affections never enter into their calculations. If everything is to be sacrificed to utility, why do you bury your grandmother at all? why don't you cut her into small pieces at once, and make portable soup of her?

"By the by, talking of portable soup, my great neighbour, Lord D——, found it necessary to look a little into his establishment; and the first discovery he made was that his cook had for some years been contracting to furnish the navy with portable soup, not made of grandmothers, but at his expense."

"I always say to young people, Beware of carelessness, no fortune will stand it long; you are on the high road to ruin, the moment you think yourself rich enough to be careless."

Speaking of education: "Never teach false morality. How exquisitely absurd to tell girls that beauty is of no value, dress of no use! Beauty is of value; her whole prospects and happiness in life may often depend upon a new gown or a becoming bonnet, and if she has five grains of common sense she will find this out. The great thing is to teach her their just value, and that there must be something better under the bonnet than a pretty face for real happiness. But never sacrifice truth."

Talking of beauty of style: "What so beautiful as that of the Bible? what poetry in its language and ideas!" and taking it down from the bookcase behind him, he read, with his beautiful voice, and in his most impressive manner, several of his favourite passages; amongst others I remember—"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of an old man;" and part of that most beautiful of Psalms, the 139th:—"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. . . . Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou

art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me; yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee;"—putting the Bible again on the shelf.

"There is one thing I feel very grateful to my father for having taught me, the habit of immediately hunting out any object I found myself ignorant of." "Remember that, F—— (addressing one of his grandsons); I have found it most useful: never submit to be ignorant when you have knowledge at your elbow."

Talking of punishments: "Ah! that is all very well; but who punishes the bore, let me ask? There is no social crime committed with such impunity."

"Have you never observed what a dislike servants have to anything cheap? they hate saving their master's money. I tried this experiment with great success the other day. Finding we consumed a great deal of soap, I sat down in my thinking-chair, and took the soap question into consideration, and I found reason to suspect that we were using a very expensive article, where a much cheaper one would serve the purpose better. I ordered half-a-dozen pounds of both sorts, but took the precaution of changing the papers on which the prices were marked, before giving them into the hands of Betty. 'Well, Betty, which soap do you find washes best?' 'Oh, please Sir, the dearest, in the blue paper; it makes a lather as well again as the other.' 'Well, Betty, you shall always have it, then;' and thus the unsuspecting Betty saved me some pounds a year, and washed the clothes better."

On his little grand-daughter running up to kiss him: "Children are excellent physiognomists, and soon discover their real friends. Luttrell calls them all lunatics; and so, in fact, they are. What is childhood but a series of happy delusions?"

"It is of importance not only that we should do good, but that we should do it in the best manner. A little judgment and a little reflection added to the gift doubles the value. Now it is lamentable to see how ignorant the poor are. I do not mean of reading and writing, but about the common affairs of life. They are as helpless as children in all difficulties. Nothing would be so useful as some short and cheap book, to instruct them what to do, to whom to go, and to give them a little advice; I mean, mere practical advice. I have begun something of this sort for my parishioners; here it is.

"*Advice to Parishioners.*

"If you begin stealing a little, you will go on from little to much, and soon become a regular thief; and then you will be hanged, or sent over seas to Botany Bay. And give me leave to tell you, transportation is no joke. Up at five in the morning, dressed in a jacket half blue half yellow, chained on to another person like two dogs, a man standing over you with a great stick, weak porridge for breakfast, bread and water for dinner, boiled beans for supper, straw to lie upon; and all this for thirty years; and then you are hanged there by order of the governor, without judge or jury. All this is very disagreeable, and you had far better avoid it by making a solemn resolution to take nothing which does not belong to you.

"Never sit in wet clothes. Off with them as soon as you can: no constitution can stand it. Look at Jackson, who lives next door to the blacksmith; he was the strongest man in the parish. Twenty different times I warned him of his folly in wearing wet clothes. He pulled off his hat and smiled, and was very civil, but clearly seemed to think it all old women's nonsense. He is now, as you see, bent double with rheumatism, and is living upon parish allowance, and scarcely able to crawl from pillar to post.

"Off with your hat when you meet a gentleman. What does it cost? Gentlemen notice these things, are offended if the civility is not paid, and pleased if it is; and what harm does it do you? When first I came to this parish, Squire Tempest wanted a postilion. John Barton was a good, civil fellow; and in thinking over the names of the village, the Squire thought of Barton, remembered his constant civility, sent for one of his sons, made him his postilion, then coachman, then bailiff, and he now holds a farm under the Squire of £500 per annum. Such things are constantly happening.

"I will have no swearing. There is pleasure in a pint of ale, but what pleasure is there in an oath? A swearer is a low, vulgar person. Swearing is fit for a tinker or a razor-grinder, not for an honest labourer in my parish.

"I must positively forbid all poaching; it is absolute ruin to yourself and your family. In the end you are sure to be detected, —a hare in one pocket and a pheasant in the other. How are you to pay ten pounds? You have not ten pence beforehand in the world. Daniel's breeches are unpaid for; you have a hole in your hat, and want a new one; your wife, an excellent woman, is about to lie in,—and you are, all of a sudden, called upon by the Justice to pay ten pounds. I shall never forget the sight of poor Cranford, hurried to Taunton Gaol; a wife and three daughters on their knees to the Justice, who was compelled to do his duty, and commit

him. The next day, beds, chairs, and clothes sold, to get the father out of gaol. Out of gaol he came; but the poor fellow could not bear the sight of his naked cottage, and to see his family pinched with hunger. You know how he ended his days. Was there a dry eye in the churchyard when he was buried? It was a lesson to poachers. It is indeed a desperate and foolish trade. Observe, I am not defending the game-laws, but I am advising you, as long as the game-laws exist, to fear them, and to take care that you and your family are not crushed by them. And, then, smart stout young men hate the gamekeeper, and make it a point of courage and spirit to oppose him. Why? The gamekeeper is paid to protect the game, and he would be a very dishonest man if he did not do his duty. What right have you to bear malice against him for this? After all, the game in justice belongs to the landowners, who feed it; and not to you, who have no land at all, and can feed nothing.

"I don't like that red nose, and those blear eyes, and that stupid downcast look. You are a drunkard. Another pint, and one pint more; a glass of gin and water, rum and milk, cider and pepper, a glass of peppermint, and all the beastly fluids which drunkards pour down their throats. It is very possible to conquer it, if you will but be resolute. I remember a man in Staffordshire who was drunk every day of his life. Every farthing he earned went to the alehouse. One evening he staggered home, and found at a late hour his wife sitting alone, and drowned in tears. He was a man not deficient in natural affections; he appeared to be struck with the wretchedness of the woman, and with some eagerness asked her why she was crying. 'I don't like to tell you, James,' she said, 'but if I must, I must; and truth is, my children have not touched a morsel of anything this blessed day. As for me, never mind me; I must leave *you* to guess how it has fared with me. But not one morsel of food could I beg or buy for those children that lie on that bed before you; and I am sure, James, it is better for us all we should die, and to my soul I wish we were dead.' 'Dead!' said James, starting up as if a flash of lightning had darted upon him; 'dead, Sally! You, and Mary, and the two young ones dead? Lookye, my lass, you see what I am now,—like a brute. I have wasted your substance,—the curse of God is upon me,—I am drawing near to the pit of destruction,—but there's an end; I feel there's an end. Give me that glass, wife.' She gave it him with astonishment and fear. He turned it topsy-turvy; and, striking the table with great violence, and flinging himself on his knees, made a most solemn and affecting vow to God of repentance and sobriety. From that moment to the day of his death he drank no fermented liquor, but confined himself entirely to tea and water.*

* A fact.

I never saw so sudden and astonishing a change. His looks became healthy, his cottage neat, his children were clad, his wife was happy; and twenty times the poor man and his wife, with tears in their eyes, have told me the story, and blessed the evening of the fourteenth of March, the day of James's restoration, and have shown me the glass he held in his hand when he made the vow of sobriety. It is all nonsense about not being able to work without ale, and gin, and cider, and fermented liquors. Do lions and cart-horses drink ale? It is mere habit. If you have good nourishing food, you can do very well without ale. Nobody works harder than the Yorkshire people, and for years together there are many Yorkshire labourers who never taste ale. I have no objection, you will observe, to a moderate use of ale, or any other liquor you can *afford* to purchase. My objection is, that you cannot afford it; that every penny you spend at the ale-house comes out of the stomachs of the poor children, and strips off the clothes of the wife.

"My dear little Nanny, don't believe a word he says. He merely means to ruin and deceive you. You have a plain answer to give:—'When I am axed in the church, and the parson has read the service, and all about it is written down in the book, then I will listen to your nonsense, and not before.' Am not I a Justice of the Peace, and have not I had a hundred foolish girls brought before me, who have all come with the same story?—'Please, your Worship, he is a false man; he promised me marriage over and over again.' I confess I have often wished for the power of hanging these rural lovers. But what use is my wishing? All that can be done with the villain is to make him pay half-a-crown a week, and you are handed over to the poor-house, and to infamy. Will no example teach you? Look to Mary Willet,—three years ago the handsomest and best girl in the village, now a slattern in the poor-house! Look at Harriet Dobson, who trusted in the promises of James Harefield's son, and, after being abandoned by him, went away in despair with a party of soldiers! How can you be such a fool as to surrender your character to the stupid flattery of a ploughboy? If the evening is pleasant, the birds sing, and flowers bloom, is that any reason why you are to forget God's Word, the happiness of your family, and your own character? What is a woman worth without character? A profligate carpenter, or a debauched watchmaker, may gain business from their skill; but how is a profligate woman to gain her bread? Who will receive *her?*

"But this is enough of my parish advice."——

"Have you observed that nothing can be done in England without a dinner? When first I came to Bristol, I found it was dinner all the day. Not the appetite of an alderman could have got through

them, or the stomach of an ostrich digested them. I examined into their objects, and found the expenses of the greater part exceeded the sum collected for the charities for whose benefit we dined. All such I refused to dine at, or subscribe to, and I dare say was considered a monster in consequence. However, it is quite true what Frere says:—'An Englishman opens, like an oyster, with a knife and fork; one never knows what is in a man till these two agents are in active employment.'

"When I hear the rustics yawn audibly at my sermons, it reminds me of that observation of Lord Ellenborough's, who, on seeing Lord —— gape during his own long and dull speech, said, 'Well, I must own there is some taste in that, but is not Lord —— rather encroaching on our privileges?'

"It is a curious fact that the peasantry in England apply the masculine and feminine gender to things, like the French. My schoolmistress here, a very respectable young woman, hurt her leg. I inquired how she was, the other day; she answered, 'He was very bad; he gave her a great deal of trouble at night.' I inquired who, in some surprise; and found it was her leg. If I complain of want of punctuality, the servants say, ''Tis long of the clock, sir, She has gone quite wrong; she 's always going wrong.'

"Some of the words used by the peasantry are very expressive: *insense*, for example, is to get the sense into a man. 'Well, John,' I sometimes say, 'have you insensed that man?' 'Yes, your honour; and he teld me he could na understand your honour na more than if ye were a Frenchman.'"

Some one mentioned that a young Scotchman, who had been lately in the neighbourhood, was about to marry an Irish widow, double his age and of considerable dimensions. "Going to marry her!" he exclaimed, bursting out laughing; "going to marry her! impossible! you mean, a part of her; he could not marry her all himself. It would be a case, not of bigamy, but trigamy; the neighbourhood or the magistrates should interfere. There is enough of her to furnish wives for a whole parish. One man marry her!—it is monstrous. You might people a colony with her; or give an assembly with her; or perhaps take your morning's walk round her, always provided there were frequent resting-places, and you were in rude health. I was once rash enough to try walking round her before breakfast, but only got half-way and gave it up exhausted. Or you might read the Riot Act and disperse her; in short, you might do anything with her but marry her." "Oh, Mr Sydney!" said a young lady, recovering from the general laugh, "did you make all that yourself?" "Yes, Lucy," throwing himself back in his chair and shaking with laughter, "all myself, child; all my own thunder. Do you think, when I am about to make a

joke, I send for my neighbours C. and G., or consult the clerk and churchwardens upon it? But let us go into the garden;" and, all laughing till we cried, without hats or bonnets, we sallied forth out of his glorified window into the garden.

Opposite was a beautiful bank with a hanging wood of fine old beech and oak, on the summit of which presented themselves, to our astonished eyes, two donkeys, with deers' antlers fastened on their heads, which ever and anon they shook, much wondering at their horned honours; whilst their attendant donkey-boy, in Sunday garb, stood grinning and blushing at their side. "There, Lady ——! you said the only thing this place wanted to make it perfect was deer; what do you say now? I have, you see, ordered my gamekeeper to drive my deer into the most picturesque point of view. Excuse their long ears, a little peculiarity belonging to parsonic deer. Their voices, too, are singular; but we do our best for you, and you are too true a friend of the Church to mention our defects." All this, of course, amidst shouts of laughter, whilst his own merry laugh might be heard above us all, ringing through the valley, and making the very echoes laugh in chorus.

Then wandering on a little further, his black crutchstick in his hand, and his white hairs blown about by the soft Somersetshire wind: "It must be admitted," said he, "if the mind vegetates, the body rejoices, in the country. What an air this is! Our climate is so mild, that myrtles and geraniums stand out all the winter; and the effects of it on the human constitution are such, that Lady ——, a model of female virtue, who never gave that excellent baronet, her husband, a moment's anxiety, declared to me with a deep sigh, after a week's residence here, that she must go, for she felt all her principles melting away under its influence. Some of my Scotch friends, it is true, complain that it is too enervating; but they are but northern barbarians, after all, and like to breathe their air raw. We civilised people of the south prefer it cooked."

On observing some of the autumn crocus in flower, he stopped: "There!" he said, "who would guess the virtue of that little plant? But I find the power of colchicum so great, that if I feel a little gout coming on, I go into the garden, and hold out my toe to that plant, and it gets well directly. I never do more without orders from head-quarters. Oh! when I have the gout, I feel as if I was walking on my eyeballs."

Going a few steps farther: "There, now lift your eyes, and tell me where another parsonage-house in England has such a view as that to boast of. What can Pall Mall or Piccadilly produce to rival it? The church, too, which you see;—it must be a satisfaction to your ladyship to find yourself so near the church. When first I came here, all that view was shut out by trees. I saw at one

glance what was to be done. I called for Jack Spratt, my carpenter, and his hatchet. Saba was in tears, Mrs Sydney in hysterics, all the family in despair; but I hardened my heart, Jack Spratt cut vigorously, at every stroke the view became more lovely, and now the whole family are converts and deny the tears."

"Did you say, a Quaker baby? Impossible! there is no such thing; there never was; they are always born broad-brimmed and in full quake. . . . Well, all I can say is, I never saw one; and what is still more remarkable, I never met with any one who had.' Do you believe in it? Lady Morley does not. Have you heard the report that they are fed on drab-coloured pap? It must be this that gives them their beautiful complexion. I have a theory about them and bluecoat boys, which I will tell you some day."

"Yes, it requires a long apprenticeship to speak well in the House of Commons. It is the most formidable ordeal in the world. Few men have succeeded who entered it late in life; Jeffrey is perhaps the best exception. Bobus used to say that there was more sense and good taste in the whole House, than in any one individual of which it was composed."

"We are told, 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath.' This of course is best; but, as it generally does, I would add, Never act or write till it has done so. This rule has saved me from many an act of folly. It is wonderful what a different view we take of the same event four-and-twenty hours after it has happened."

"Yes, I think the Duke of —— wore his rank most gracefully. I have heard that he was once mounting his horse, in company with the Archbishop of York, and desired the groom to let go the rein. The groom stupidly retained it. The nobleman snatched it with some violence, and, riding off, called him a fool. He had hardly proceeded a hundred yards, when he stopped, saying, 'Why did I call that man a fool? I dare say he is not so great a fool as I am.' He instantly turned his horse, galloped after the man, and made his peace with a kind word and half-a-crown."

This pretty trait reminds me of what I have not unfrequently seen in my father, and think I may mention here; for though it is not the part of a daughter to reveal faults, yet a fault nobly repaired or repented of, adds to the respect and interest which a character inspires. My father was by nature quick and hasty, yet he always struggled against it; made many regulations to avoid exciting such feelings; and when he did give way, it often excited my admiration to see him gradually subduing his chafed spirit, and to observe his dissatisfaction with himself till he had humbled himself and made his peace, it mattered not with whom, groom or child. He could not bear the reproaches of his own heart.

"In this hard, rough, every-day working world, the object of education should not be, as it so often is, to excite and sharpen the acute feelings of a young person, but to calm and blunt them; preserving only those warm and generous feelings which give strength and courage to perform the great duties of life."

"Once, when talking with Lord —— on the subject of Bible names, I could not remember the name of one of Job's daughters. 'Kezia,' said he immediately. Surprised, I congratulated him upon being so well read in Bible lore. 'Oh!' said he, 'my three grey-hounds are named after Job's daughters.'"

"Ah!" said my father, on taking some guests round his farm, "you will find it is a formidable undertaking to visit an improver; we spare you nothing, from the garret to the pig-stye. It is like a Frenchman's explanation; they never give you credit for knowing the commonest facts. C'est toujours, 'Commençons au déluge.' My heart sinks when a Frenchman begins, 'Mon ami, je vais vous expliquer tout cela.' A fellow-traveller in the *diligence* once explained to me how to cut a sandwich, all the way from Amiens to Paris."

"Yes, he was a clever and liberal man, but his wife was a much more remarkable woman; she had a truly porcelain understanding."

"True, it is most painful not to meet the kindness and affection you feel you have deserved and have a right to expect from others; but it is a mistake to complain of it, for it is of no use: you cannot extort friendship with a cocked pistol."

On some one of his guests lamenting they had left something behind: "Ah!" he said, "that would not have happened if you had had a screaming gate." "A screaming gate? what do you mean, Mr Smith?" "Yes, everybody should have a screaming gate. We all arrived once at a friend's house just before dinner, hot, tired, and dusty,—a large party assembled,—and found all the keys of our trunks had been left behind; since then I have established a *screaming* gate. We never set out on our journey now without stopping at a gate about ten minutes' distance from the house, to consider what we have left behind: the result has been excellent."

"Nothing is so tiresome to me as a person who is always talking Phœbuses; I prefer plain honest dulness a thousand times."

"Cultivate the love of reading in a young person; it is an unceasing source of pleasure, and probably of innocence."

Alluding to the injudicious endeavours to force religion on very young children: "Of this much I am sure, that the attempt to impress notions of religion on very young children, before they are capable of thinking seriously for one moment upon anything, is to

associate, for the whole of subsequent life, *ennui* and disgust with the idea of sacred reflections; and I am fully persuaded more injury is done by injudicious zeal than by neglect."

"Yes, it was a mistake to write any more. He was a one-book man. Some men have only one book in them; others, a library."

"I believe one of the Duke of Wellington's earliest victories was at Eton, over my eldest brother, Bobus. I have heard that the Duke reminded him of it on seeing him accidentally in society many years after the Spanish campaigns."

On meeting a young lady who had just entered the garden, and shaking hands with her: "I must," he said "give you a lesson in shaking hands, I see. There is nothing more characteristic than shakes of the hand. I have classified them. Lister, when he was here, illustrated some of them. Ask Mrs Sydney to show you his sketches of them when you go in. There is the *high official*,—the body erect, and a rapid, short shake, near the chin. There is the *mort-main*,—the flat hand introduced into your palm, and hardly conscious of its contiguity. The *digital*,—one finger held out, much used by the high clergy. There is the *shakus rusticus*, where your hand is seized in an iron grasp, betokening rude health, warm heart, and distance from the metropolis; but producing a strong sense of relief on your part when you find your hand released and your fingers unbroken. The next to this is the *retentive shake*,—one which, beginning with vigour, pauses as it were to take breath, but without relinquishing its prey, and before your are aware begins again, till you feel anxious as to the result, and have no shake left in you. There are other varieties, but this is enough for one lesson."

On examining some new flowers in the garden, a beautiful girl, who was of the party, exclaimed, "Oh, Mr Sydney! this pea will never come to perfection." "Permit me, then," said he, gently taking her hand and walking towards the plant, "to lead perfection to the pea."

"I think an office for marriage would be a very good thing. I am sure I could marry people much better than they marry themselves; young people are so absurd, and accept and refuse for such foolish reasons. I wish, Miss ——, you would employ me; I have succeeded admirably already on two occasions: will you take my advice?" "Oh yes, Mr Sydney." "Well, then, we will have a little private conversation, and consider your case; but now I must go and look after my parish."

"After luncheon may I have the honour of driving you round my wood?" (addressing one of the ladies). "David, bring me my hat." And with his crutch-stick in his hand, he sallied forth into his parish. My father writes, "I lay a particular stress upon visit-

ing the poor in person. He who only knows the miseries of mankind at second-hand, and by description, has but a faint idea of what is really suffered in the world." He practised diligently what he preached, and always seemed to carry comfort and pleasure into every cottage he entered, for he brought what the poor value so highly, and so seldom obtain—*sympathy*. He appeared, and was, interested in their concerns. When he sat down in a cottage, nothing escaped his eye: Solomon's Temple in rockwork, —the Prodigal Son on the wall,—the old woman in the ingle-nook, —the dirty, rosy infant on the floor, all came in for a share of his notice.

"Why, John, I took you for a general officer at least, in that new red waistcoat; but, John, I think there is a touch of pride in those brass buttons, don't you?" "Na, your honour, there beant," said John, highly gratified, and grinning from ear to ear. "Well, and how do you do?" to the old woman. "Oh! the stuff your honour sent did me a world of good." "Ah, I thought it would reach the right *spot*, Dame; well, then, you must send the bottle for some more."

"At this time," writes Mrs Marcet, "he was in the habit of spending half an hour every morning with a young workman who was in the last stage of consumption; 'part of that time,' he said, 'was spent in preparing him for another world, and part in endeavouring to render his last days in this as cheerful and as happy as he could.' He used to stop and talk to the children of the village as he passed along the road. He always kept a box of sugar-plums in his pocket for these occasions, and often some rosy-faced urchin was made happy by sharing its contents, or obtaining a penny to buy a tart. 'Let it be large and full of juice, Johnny,' he would say, 'so that it may run down both corners of the mouth.' Stopping another: 'What do you call me? who am I?' 'Why, we calls you the Parson Doctor.' 'Oh, you little rogue!' pinching his cheek smilingly, and holding up his fist at him, 'I will send you a dose when I go home.'

"At last he returned, and presently might be heard the cry of 'Jack Spratt!'—a few minutes after, 'Betty Loch!' (the garden-woman); then 'Bunch!' (now converted into a cook); then 'Annie Kay!' Shortly after he would come up into the drawing-room with a large manuscript book in his hand, and, seating himself in an arm-chair, look round upon us. 'What are you reading?' 'The Life of Franklin.' 'Oh, that is right. I recommend the study of Franklin to all young people; he was a real philanthropist, a wonderful man. It has been said, that it was honour enough to any one country to have produced such a man as Franklin. I

think all young people should read the "Spectator," too,—a paper a-day; I always did.'

"On Miss —— and her friend Dr ——'s daughter passing through the room, some one remarked what a pretty contrast their different styles of beauty made. 'Yes,' he said, 'Miss —— reminds me of a youthful Minerva; and her friend, as Dr ——'s daughter, must be, you know, the Venus de Medicis.'

"Talking of Switzerland: 'Well, what are they doing now in the irritable little republic? They say a change in the hour of shutting the gates convulsed the whole canton of Geneva. Have they deposed M—— yet? You remember ——'s answer, when they sent him a decree that he could not be permitted to fire *in* the republic? "Very well," said he, "it makes no sort of difference to me; I can very easily fire *over* the republic."'

"Some one mentioning a marriage about to take place: 'Why, it is like the union of an acid and an alkali; the result must be a *tertium quid*, or neutral salt.'

"'What a beautiful thought! (reading from a book in his hand:) a sunbeam passes through pollution unpolluted.'

"'Ah! what female heart can withstand a red-coat? I think this should be a part of female education; it is much neglected. As you have the rocking-horse to accustom them to ride, I would have military dolls in the nursery, to harden their hearts against officers and red-coats. I found myself in company with some officers at the country-house of a friend once; and as the repast advanced the colonel became very eloquent, and communicated to us a military definition of vice and virtue. "Vice," he said, "was a d—d cocked-tailed fellow; and virtue," said he (striking the table with his fist, to enforce the description,) "was a fellow fenced about for the good of the service." We all burst into such an uncontrollable paroxysm of laughter, that I began to fear the honest colonel might think it for the good of the service to shoot us through the head; so, for the good of the Church, hastened to agree with him, and we parted very good friends.'

"'Yes, Mr—— has great good sense; but I never met a manner more entirely without frill.'

"Talking of Lord Denman: 'What a face he has! how well he looks his part! He is stamped by nature for a Chief-Justice. He is an honourable, high-minded man. I have a great respect for him.'

"'I will explain it to you,' said Mr D——. 'Oh, pray don't, my dear D——,' said Sydney laughing; 'I did understand a little about the Scotch Kirk before you undertook to explain it to me yesterday; but now my mind is like a London fog on the subject.'

"'But I came up to speak to Annie Kay. Where is Annie Kay?

Ring the bell for Annie Kay.' Kay appeared. 'Bring me my medicine-book, Annie Kay. Kay is my apothecary's boy, and makes up my medicines.' Kay appears with the book. 'I am a great doctor; would you like to hear some of my medicines?' 'Oh yes, Mr Sydney.' 'There is the Gentlejog, a pleasure to take it,—the Bull-dog, for more serious cases,—Peter's puke,—Heart's delight, the comfort of all the old women in the village,—Rub-a-dub, a capital embrocation,—Dead-stop, settles the matter at once, —Up-with-it-then needs no explanation; and so on. Now, Annie Kay, give Mrs Spratt a bottle of Rub-a-dub; and to Mr Coles a dose of Dead-stop and twenty drops of laudanum.'

"'This is the house to be ill in' (turning to us); 'indeed every body who comes is expected to take a little something; I consider it a delicate compliment when my guests have a slight illness here. We have contrivances for everything. Have you seen my patent armour. No? Annie Kay, bring my patent armour. Now, look here: if you have a stiff neck or swelled face, here is this sweet case of tin filled with hot water, and covered with flannel to put round your neck, and you are well directly. Likewise, a patent tin shoulder, in case of rheumatism. There you see a stomach-tin, the greatest comfort in life; and lastly, here is a tin slipper, to be filled with hot water, which you can sit with in the drawing-room, should you come in chilled, without wetting your feet, Come and see my apothecary's shop.'

"We all went downstairs, and entered a room filled entirely on one side with medicines, and on the other with every description of groceries and household or agricultural necessaries; in the centre, a large chest, forming a table, and divided into compartments for soap, candles, salt, and sugar.

"'Here you see,' said he, 'every human want before you:—

> 'Man wants but little here below,
> As beef, veal, mutton, pork, lamb, venison show;'

spreading out his arms to exhibit everything, and laughing. 'Life is a difficult thing in the country, I assure you, and it requires a good deal of forethought to steer the ship, when you live twelve miles from a lemon.

"'By the bye, that reminds me of one of our greatest domestic triumphs. Some years ago my friend C——, the arch-epicure of the Northern Circuit, was dining with me in the country. On sitting down to dinner, he turned round to the servant, and desired him to look in his great-coat pocket, and he would find a lemon; "For," he said, "I thought it likely you might have duck and green-peas for dinner, and therefore thought it prudent, at this distance from a town, to provide a lemon." I turned round, and exclaimed indignantly, "Bunch, bring in the lemon-bag!" and Bunch ap-

peared with a bag containing a dozen lemons. He respected us wonderfully after that. Oh, it is reported that he goes to bed with concentrated lozenges of wild-duck, so as to have the taste constantly in his mouth when he wakes in the night.'

"'Look here, this is a stomach-pump; you can't die here. Bobus roared with laughter when I showed it to him, but I saved my footman's life by it.* He swallowed as much arsenic as would have poisoned all the rats in the House of Lords; but I pumped lime-water into him night and day for many hours at a time, and there he is. This is my medical department. Saba used to be my apothecary's boy before Dr Holland carried her off; Annie Kay is now promoted to it.'

"We spent some time in examining the wonders of the shop, as he called it; he showing us all sorts of contrivances and comforts for both rich and poor; and, in doing so, exhibited at the same time that mixture of sense, nonsense, forethought, and gaiety, so peculiar to himself, and which gave a charm even to the details of a grocer's shop. We then returned to the drawing-room: in a short time he followed us up, with another book in his hand. 'Mrs Sydney, I find the cook wants yeast and eggs.' 'Yes, she has not been able to get any.' 'Why did you not write it down in *my book*, then? I always tell Mrs Sydney, when she wants anything, to write it down in my book; once down in my book, and it is done directly. Look here, it is divided into different heads,—the carpenter, the blacksmith, the farm, the sick, the house, &c. &c.; that is the way to keep house in the country. Every day I look through these wants, and remedy them. Now, Mrs Sydney, you want eggs and yeast. I will mount the boys on the ponies, and they shall scour the country forthwith, and you shall be supplied with yeast and eggs till you cry, Hold! hold! enough!'

"Then, looking round on us: 'I wish I could sew. I believe one reason why women are so much more cheerful, generally, than men, is because they can work, and vary more their employments. Lady —— used to teach her sons carpet-work. All men ought to learn to sew.'

* Literally true. The man had a passion for dough, and, returning hungry one night, found a lump of dough which had been prepared with arsenic for the rats, left most improperly by the gardener on the kitchen dresser; and, indulging his passion, he devoured a considerable quantity of it. The punishment was speedy; my father was called up, and, on hearing what had happened, put the stomach-pump instantly into use, and, turning to his medical books, applied incessantly the proper remedies all night, till the arrival of the medical man in the morning. The remaining dough was analysed, and I am afraid to state from memory the number of grains of arsenic he had swallowed. The medical man said, nothing but the promptness of my father's remedies could possibly have saved the poor man's life, which remained doubtful for many days; and it was months before he recovered from its effects. But he lived to show his gratitude to his master by his watchful and tender care of him in his last illness.

"Speaking of manners as a part of education: 'Yes, manners are often too much neglected; they are most important to men, no less than to women. I believe the English are the most disagreeable people under the sun; not so much because Mr John Bull disdains to talk, as that the respected individual has nothing to say, and because he totally neglects manners. Look at a French carter; he takes off his hat to his neighbour carter, and inquires after, "la santé de madame," with a bow that would not have disgraced Sir Charles Grandison; and I have often seen a French soubrette with a far better manner than an English duchess. The true point at which a sensible girl should aim in manners is to be well behaved without being insipid. It is far better nevertheless to fail in the latter than in the former point; but life is too short to get over a bad manner; besides, manners are the shadows of virtue.'

"'It is astonishing the influence foolish apothegms have upon the mass of mankind, though they are not unfrequently fallacies. Here are a few I amused myself with writing, long before Bentham's book on Fallacies.

"*Fallacy I.—'Because I have gone through it, my son shall go through it also.'*

"A man gets well pummelled at a public school; is subject to every misery and every indignity which seventeen years of age can inflict upon nine and ten; has his eye nearly knocked out, and his clothes stolen and cut to pieces; and twenty years afterwards, when he is a chrysalis, and has forgotten the miseries of his grub state, is determined to act a manly part in life, and says, 'I passed through all that myself, and I am determined my son shall pass through it as I have done;' and away goes his bleating progeny to the tyranny and servitude of the long chamber or the large dormitory. It would surely be much more rational to say, 'Because I have passed through it, I am determined my son shall not pass through it; because I was kicked for nothing, and cuffed for nothing, and fagged for everything, I will spare all these miseries to my child.' It is not for any good which may be derived from this rough usage; that has not been weighed and considered; few persons are capable of weighing its effects upon character; but there is a sort of compensatory and consolatory notion, that the present generation (whether useful or not, no matter) are not to come off scot-free, but are to have their share of ill-usage; as if the black eye and bloody nose which Master John Jackson received in 1800, are less black and bloody by the application of similar violence to similar parts of Master Thomas Jackson, the son, in 1830. This is not only sad nonsense, but cruel nonsense.

The only use to be derived from the recollection of what we have suffered in youth, is a fixed determination to screen those we educate from every evil and inconvenience, from subjection to which there are not cogent reasons for submitting. Can anything be more stupid and preposterous than this concealed revenge upon the rising generation, and latent envy lest they should avail themselves of the improvements time has made, and pass a happier youth than their fathers have done?

"*Fallacy II.*—'*I have said I will do it, and I* will *do it; I will stick to my word.*'

"This fallacy proceeds from confounding resolutions with promises. If you have promised to give a man a guinea for a reward, or to sell him a horse or a field, you must do it; you are dishonest if you do not. But if you have made a resolution to eat no meat for a year, and everybody about you sees that you are doing mischief to your constitution, is it any answer to say, you have said so, and you will stick to your word? With whom have you made the contract with but yourself? and if you and yourself, the two contracting parties, agree to break the contract, where is the evil, or who is injured?

"*Fallacy III.*—'*I object to half-measures,—it is neither one thing nor the other.*'

"But why *should* it be either one thing or the other? why not something between both? Why are half-measures necessarily or probably unwise measures? I am embarrassed in my circumstances;—one of my plans is, to persevere boldly in the same line of expense, and to trust to the chapter of accidents for some increase of fortune; the other is, to retire entirely from the world, and to hide myself in a cottage;—but I end with doing neither, and take a middle course of diminished expenditure. I do neither one thing nor the other, but possibly act wiser than if I had done either. I am highly offended by the conduct of an acquaintance; I neither overlook it entirely nor do I proceed to call him out; I do neither, but show him, by a serious change of manner, that I consider myself to have been ill-treated. I effect my object by half-measures. I cannot agree entirely with the Opposition or the Ministry; it may very easily happen that my half-measures are wiser than the extremes to which they are opposed. But it is a sort of metaphor which debauches the understanding of *foolish* people; and when half-measures are mentioned, they have much the same feeling as if they were cheated—as if they had bargained for a whole bushel and received but half. To act in extremes is

sometimes wisdom; to *avoid* them is sometimes wisdom; every measure must be judged of by its own particular circumstances."

"'Did you ever hear my definition of marriage? It is, that it resembles a pair of shears, so joined that they cannot be separated; often moving in opposite directions, yet always punishing any one who comes between them.'

"Some one speaking of Macaulay: 'Yes, I take great credit to myself; I always prophesied his greatness from the first moment I saw him, then a very young and unknown man, on the Northern Circuit. There are no limits to his knowledge, on small subjects as well as great; he is like a book in breeches. . . . Yes, I agree, he is certainly more agreeable since his return from India. His enemies might perhaps have said before (though I never did so) that he talked rather too much; but now he has occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation perfectly delightful. But what is far better and more important than all this is, that I believe Macaulay to be incorruptible. You might lay ribbons, stars, garters, wealth, titles, before him in vain. He has an honest, genuine love of his country, and the world could not bribe him to neglect her interests.'

"Talking of absence: 'The oddest instance of absence of mind happened to me once in forgetting my own name. I knocked at a door in London; asked, Is Mrs B—— at home? "Yes, Sir; pray what name shall I say?" I looked in the man's face astonished:—what name? what name? ay, that is the question; what is my name? I believe the man thought me mad; but it is literally true, that during the space of two or three minutes I had no more idea who I was than if I had never existed. I did not know whether I was a Dissenter or a layman. I felt as dull as Sternhold and Hopkins. At last, to my great relief, it flashed across me that I was Sydney Smith.'

"'I heard of a clergyman who went jogging along the road till he came to a turnpike. "What is to pay?" "Pay, Sir? for what?" asked the turnpike man. "Why, for my horse, to be sure." "Your horse, Sir? what horse? Here is no horse, Sir." "No horse? God bless me!" said he suddenly, looking down between his legs, "I thought I was on horseback."'

"'Lord Dudley was one of the most absent men I think I ever met in society. One day he met me in the street, and invited me to meet myself. "Dine with me to-day; dine with me, and I will get Sydney Smith to meet you." I admitted the temptation he held out to me, but said I was engaged to meet him elsewhere. Another time, on meeting me, he turned back, put his arm through mine, muttering, "I don't mind walking with him a little way; I'll

walk with him as far as the end of the street." As we proceeded together, W—— passed; "That is the villain," exclaimed he, "who helped me yesterday to asparagus, and gave me no toast." He very nearly overset my gravity once in the pulpit. He was sitting immediately under me, apparently very attentive, when suddenly he took up his stick, as if he had been in the house of Commons, and tapping on the ground with it, cried out in a low but very audible whisper, "Hear! hear! hear!"'

"'By the bye, it happened to be a charity sermon, and I considered it a wonderful proof of my eloquence, that it actually moved old Lady C—— to borrow a sovereign from Dudley, and that he actually gave it her, though knowing he must take a long farewell of it. I was told afterwards by Lady S—— that she rejoiced to see it had brought 'iron tears down Pluto's cheek' (meaning by that her husband), certainly little given to the melting mood in any sense.'

"'One speech, I remember, of Dudley's, gratified me much. When I took leave of him, on quitting London to go into Yorkshire, he said to me, "You have been laughing at me constantly, Sydney, for the last seven years, and yet in all that time you never said a single thing to me that I wished unsaid." This, I confess, pleased me.* . . . But I must go and scour the country for yeast and eggs;'—and off he went.

"After luncheon appeared at the door a low green garden chair, holding two, and drawn by the two donkeys already introduced; but despoiled, to their obvious relief, of their antlers. 'This was built by my village carpenter,' said he, 'but its chief merit is that it cannot be overturned. You need not fear my driving now; Mrs Sydney will give me an excellent character. She was very much afraid of me when I first took to driving her in Yorkshire, but she raised my wages before the first month. I am become an excellent whip I assure you.' So saying, he mounted into the little vehicle, and set off with his lady at a foot's pace, we following in his train down the pretty valley into which the garden opened, and through his wood walks, till we came out upon a fine table-land above the house commanding a splendid view of the fine range of the Quantoc Hills on the one side, and the rich Vale of Taunton on the other.

"'There:' said he, 'behold all the wonders of the world beneath

* It is most gratifying to find how often this delicate use of his great powers of wit and sarcasm is alluded to by his friends and acquaintance in the papers entrusted to me. I see it is said of him, in one of the publications, at his death:—"It is a rare distinction, but one which ought to be written on his monument, that while he wasted no gift of those so liberally bestowed upon him, in ministering to the unworthy pleasures of others, or in promoting his own selfish aggrandisement,—as a wit he was more beloved than feared."

you! can anything be more exquisite, more beautiful? I often come up here to meditate. I think of building a Gazebo here. The landscape is perfect; it wants nothing but water and a wise man. I think it was Jekyll who used to say, that "the further he went west, the more convinced he felt that the wise men did come from the east." We have not such an article. You might ride from the rising up of the sun until the going down thereof in these regions, and not find one (I mean a real philosopher) whom you would consult on the great affairs of life. We are thoroughly primitive; agriculture and agricultural tools are fifty years behind the rest of England.

"'A neighbouring squire called on me the other day, and informed me he had been reading a delightful book. The fact of his having any literary pursuits at all was equally agreeable and surprising to me, and I inquired the subject of his studies. "Oh!" said he, "the Arabian Night's Entertainments; I have just got it, and I advise you to read it. I assure you, Mr Smith, you will find it a most amusing book." I thanked him, cordially agreed with him, but ventured to suggest that the book was not entirely unknown to me.'

"'A joke goes a great way in the country. I have known one last pretty well for seven years. I remember making a joke after a meeting of the clergy, in Yorkshire, where there was a Rev. Mr Buckle, who never spoke when I gave his health; saying, that he was a buckle without a tongue. Most persons within hearing laughed, but my next neighbour sat unmoved and sunk in thought. At last, a quarter of an hour after we had all done, he suddenly nudged me, exclaiming, "I see *now* what you meant, Mr Smith; you meant a joke." "Yes," I said, "Sir; I believe I did." Upon which he began laughing so heartily, that I thought he would choke, and was obliged to pat him on the back.'

"Talking of the singular degree of obstinacy of Miss ——, on the most difficult and doubtful subjects, 'Oh! nothing but a surgical operation will avail; it must be cut out of her.'

"'I see you will not believe it, but I was once very shy.' 'Were you indeed, Mr Smith? how did you cure yourself.' 'Why it was not very long before I made two very useful discoveries; first, that all mankind were not solely employed in observing me (a belief that all young people have); and next, that shamming was of no use; that the world was very clear-sighted, and soon estimated a man at his just value. This cured me, and I determined to be natural, and let the world find me out.'

"'Oh yes! we both talk a great deal, but I don't believe Macaulay ever did hear my voice,' he exclaimed, laughing. 'Sometimes, when I have told a good story, I have thought to myself, Poor

Macaulay! he will be very sorry some day to have missed hearing that.'

"'Other rules vary; this is the only one you will find without exception,—that, in this world, the salary or reward is always in the inverse ratio of the duties performed.'

"Some one speaking of Mr Grenville: 'I always feel better for being in Mr Grenville's company; it is a beautiful sunset. You know the man in a regiment who is selected to stand out before them as their model; he is called the fugleman. Now, Mr Grenville I always consider as the fugleman of old age. He has contrived to combine the freshness and greeness of mind belonging to youth, with the dignity and wisdom of age.'

"Some one wondering at his praises of ——, and telling Sydney that he often abused him: 'Oh!' said my father, laughing, 'I know he does not spare me, but that is no reason I should not praise him. At all times I had rather be the *ox* than the *butcher*.'

"Talking of Sheridan: 'Creevy told me, once, when dining with Sheridan, after the ladies had departed, he drew the chair to the fire, and confided to Creevy that they had just had a fortune left them. "Mrs Sheridan and I," said he; "have made the solemn vow to each other to mention it to no one, and nothing induces me now to confide it to you but the absolute conviction that Mrs Sheridan is at this moment confiding it to Mrs Creevy up-stairs."' Soon after this I went to visit him in the country with a large party; he had taken a villa. No expense was spared; a magnificent dinner, excellent wines, but not a candle to be had to go to bed by in the house; in the morning no butter appeared, or was to be procured for breakfast. He said, it was not a butter country, he believed. But with Sheridan for host, and the charm of his wit and conversation, who cared for candles, butter, or anything else? In the evening there was a quarrel amongst the fiddlers, they absolutely refusing to play with a blind fiddler, who had unexpectedly arrived and insisted upon performing with them. He turned out at last to be Mathews; his acting was quite inimitable.'

"This brought us home again. Meeting at the door his grandson, returning quite exhausted with a prodigious walk: 'Oh, foolish boy! remember, head for glory, feet for use.'

"He then left us, and might be seen in his pretty library; sometimes in his arm-chair, seated with books of different kinds piled round him, some grave, some gay, as his humour varied from hour to hour. And this rapid change of mood, which I see his friend Mr Moore remarks upon, was one thing amongst many which gave such freshness and raciness to his conversation: you never could guess what would come next. At other times seated at a large table in the bay-window, with his desk before him—on one end of

this table a case, something like a small deal music-stand, filled with manuscript books—on the other a large deal tray, filled with a leaden ink-stand, containing ink enough for a county; a magnifying glass; a carpenter's rule; several large steel pens, which it was high treason to touch; a glass bowl full of shot and water, to clean these precious pens; and some red tape, which he called 'one of the grammars of life;' a measuring line, and various other articles, more useful than ornamental. At this writing establishment, unique of its kind, he could turn his mind with equal facility, in company or alone, to any subject, whether of business, study, politics, instruction, or amusement, and move the minds of his hearers to laughter or tears at his pleasure."

He used to say he never considered his education finished. To the last years of his life, he kept up his classical studies, his reading and analysis of the Bible (of which I find notes in his papers), and profane and ecclesiastical history, from which he frequently put down hints, some of which I have given. He was also very fond of exercising himself in translating English into French, which he spoke with great fluency, but did not write correctly. He frequently interrupted these pursuits by issuing forth into his gay garden, to take a stroll round it by himself, stopping at intervals, with his crutch-stick swung behind him, as usual, as if meditating on the subject of his studies; or sometimes sitting down on the lawn to watch or join in the gambols of his little grandchildren, or to comfort them in some childish affliction, in which the never-failing sugar-plum box was found a most useful assistant; sometimes in conference with Jack Spratt or Annie Kay on some domestic concern. When we met at dinner, he was, if possible, more agreeable than he had been during the day. "Sydney's wit," as was happily said of him by Mr Howard, "is always fresh; you find the *dew* still on it." It is remarked of him somewhere that "he had the power of breathing the breath of life into a dead truism; everything coming from his mind seemed to be original, even when it was old."

One of his most intimate friends writes of him:—"It is quite extraordinary how different every word that drops from Sydney's pen is from anything else in the world. Individuality is stamped on every sentence, and you can hardly read a page without coming to some sentence that no other man could have written. It was the same with his conversation." And again I see it said of him, "His power of bringing together and harmonising the most contrary ideas was extraordinary: the strangeness as well as aptness of his similitudes, the rapidity of his changes, the readiness of his rejoinders, and his felicity of expression, were all perfect. His wit

was never the result of labour, and needed no preparation; it was ever fresh and flowing: he had no need to be sparing of to keep it for state occasions, and it amused himself as well as his hearers.

It signified not what the materials were. I never remember a dull dinner in his company.* He extracted amusement from every subject, however hopeless. He descended and adapted himself to the meanest capacity, without seeming to do so; he led without seeking to lead; he never sought to shine—the light appeared because he could not help it. Nobody felt excluded. He had the happy art of always saying the best thing in the best manner to the right person at the right moment; it was a touch-and-go impossible to describe, guided by such tact and attention to the feelings of others, that those he most attacked seemed most to enjoy the attack: never in the same mood for two minutes together, and each mood seemed to be more agreeable than the last. "I talk a little sometimes," said he, "and it used to be an amusement amongst the servants at the Archbishop of York's, to snatch away my plate when I began talking; so I got a habit of holding it with one hand when so engaged, and dining at single anchor."

"Now, I mean not to drink one drop of wine to-day, and I shall be mad with spirits. I always am when I drink no wine. It is curious the effect a thimbleful of wine has upon me; I feel as flat as ——'s jokes; it destroys my understanding: I forget the number of the muses, and think them thirty-nine of course; and only get myself right again by repeating the lines, and finding 'Descend, ye thirty-nine!' two feet two long."

"Oh, Saba carves for me. I always tell her I shall cut her off with a shilling if she ever asks me to help her to a dish before me. It is quite a pleasure to see her carve."

"That pudding! yes, that was the pudding Lady Holland asked the recipe for when she came to see us. I shook my head, and said it could not be done, even for her ladyship. She became more urgent; Mrs Sydney was soft-hearted, and gave it. The glory of it almost turned my cook's head! she has never been the same since. But our forte in the culinary line is our salads: I pique myself on our salads. Saba always dresses them after my recipe. I have put it into verse. Taste it, and, if you like it, I will give it you. I was not aware how much it had contributed to my reputation, till I met Lady —— at Bowood, who begged to be introduced to me, saying, she had so long wished to know me. I was of course highly flattered, till she added, 'For, Mr Smith, I have heard so much of your recipe for salads, that I was most

* My poor mother felt the change so strongly after his death that, on dining out for the first time alone, she said, "Everybody seemed to her so unusually flat, that she thought they must all have suffered some severe loss."

anxious to obtain it from you.' Such and so various are the sources of fame!

"To make this condiment, your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two hard-boil'd eggs;
Two boil'd potatoes, pass'd through kitchen sieve,
Smoothness and softness to the salad give,
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, half-suspected, animate the whole.
Of mordant mustard add a single spoon,
Distrust the condiment that bites so soon;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault,
To add a double quantity of salt;
Four times the spoon with oil from Lucca brown,
And twice with vinegar procured from town;
And, lastly, o'er the flavoured compound toss
A magic soupçon of anchovy sauce.
Oh, green and glorious! Oh, herbaceous treat!
'Twould tempt the dying anchorite to eat:
Back to the world he'd turn his fleeting soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad-bowl!
Serenely full, the epicure would say,
Fate cannot harm me, I have dined to-day."

"Mrs Sydney was dreadfully alarmed about her side-dishes the first time Luttrell paid us a visit, and grew pale as the covers were lifted; but they stood the test, Luttrell tasted and praised. He spent a week with us, and having associated him only with Pall Mall, I confess I was agreeably surprised to find how pleasant an inmate he made of a country-house; and almost of a family party; so light in hand, so willing to be pleased. Some of his Irish stories, too, were most amusing, and his manner of telling them so good. One: 'Is your master at home, Paddy?' '*No*, your honour.' 'Why, I saw him go in five minutes ago.' 'Faith, your honour, he's not exactly at home; he's only there in the back-yard a-shooting rats with cannon, your honour, for his *devarsion*.'

"A school examination, too: the children were asked what the first woman was made of. A general burst of 'Ribs of *mon!* ribs of *mon!*' 'And what was the first man made of?' '*Doost* and ashes! *doost* and ashes!' was the reply. After this trial of us, he repeated his visits several times, and we found him a most agreeable inmate.

"Oh, don't tell me of facts, I never believe facts: you know Canning said nothing was so fallacious as facts, except figures."

"My friend Ord's place is the last spot in England: all beyond is chaos."

"That is a fine idea of Clarke's:—'The frost is God's plough, which He drives through every inch of ground in the world, opening each clod and pulverising the whole.'"

"When some one asked what could induce the Ministry to send

Lord M—— to Ireland and Lord C—— to Scotland, Jekyll said, 'Oh, it is only the doctor who has put wrong labels on them by mistake.' The apothecaries' boys in London do this on purpose, and change the labels for their amusement: so Lady F. takes Lord D.'s embrocation, and Lord D. rubs his leg with her draught: but the most remarkable part of it all is, that it answers just as well as if the labels had been left."

"I once dissuaded a youth from entering the army, on which he was bent, at the risk of breaking his mother's heart, by asking him how he would prevent his sword from getting between his legs. It quite staggered him; he never solved the difficulty, and took to peace instead of war."

"I agree with Sir James Mackintosh, and have found the world more good and more foolish than I thought when young."

"It is an unlucky book;—fine sentiments fined down till you can't see them; encouraging young ladies in dangerous imaginings of what is *not;* of an exquisite fellow bursting with sentiment, only he is in the moon and can't be reached. I will, I think, write an opposition hero, who shall be the antidote."

"The most promising sign in a boy is, I should say, mathematics."

"Madame de Sévigné I think much overpraised; everybody writes as well now. Lady Mary Wortley wrote much better, sound sense. Twelve volumes of pretty turns are too much."

"Ah, you always detect a little of the Irish fossil, the potato, peeping out in an Irishman."

Some one, speaking of missions, ridiculed them as inefficient. My father dissented, saying, that "though all was not done that was projected, or even boasted of, yet that much good resulted; and that wherever Christianity was taught, it brought with it the additional good of civilisation in its train, and men became better carpenters, better cultivators, better everything."

"Have you heard my parody on Pope?—

> "Why has not man a collar and a log?
> For this plain reason—man is not a dog.
> Why is not man served up with sauce in dish?
> For this plain reason—man is not a fish.

There are a great many other *whys*, but I will spare you."

"Was not—— very disagreeable? 'Why, he was as disagreeable as the occasion would permit,' Luttrell said."

"Nobody was more witty or more bitter than Lord Ellenborough. A young lawyer, trembling with fear, rose to make his first speech, and began: 'My lord, my unfortunate client—. My lord, my unfortunate client— My lord'— 'Go on, Sir, go on,' said Lord E.; 'as far as you have proceeded hitherto, the Court is entirely with

you.' This was perhaps irresistible; but yet, how wicked! how cruel! it deserves a thousand years' punishment at least."

"Luttrell used to say, 'I hate the sight of monkeys; they remind me so of poor relations.'"

"Oh, those sisters were all so beautiful, that Paris could not have decided between them, but would have cut his apple in slices."

"When I went into Rundell and Bridges', there were heaps of diamonds lying loose about the counter. I never saw so many temptations, and so little apparent watchfulness. I thought there were many sops, and no Cerberus. But they told me, when I asked, that there were unseen eyes directed upon me in every part of the shop."

Speaking of Lady Murray's mother, who had a most benevolent countenance: "Her smile is so radiant, that I believe it would force even a gooseberry bush into flower."

Some young person, answering on a subject in discussion, "I don't know that, Mr Smith," he said, smiling, "Ah! what you don't know would make a great book."

"I never go to tragedies, my heart is too soft. There is too much real misery in life. But what a face she had! The gods do not bestow such a face as Mrs Siddons' on the stage more than once in a century. I knew her very well, and she had the good taste to laugh heartily at my jokes; she was an excellent person, but she was not remarkable out of her profession, and never got out of tragedy even in common life. She used to *stab* the potatoes; and said, 'Boy, give me a knife!' as she would have said, 'Give me the dagger!'

"Oh, Mrs Sydney believes it is all true; and when I went with her formerly to the play, I was always obliged to sit behind her, and whisper, 'Why, Kate, he is not *really* going to kill her,—she is not really dead, you know;' or she would have cried her eyes out and gone into hysterics."

"All gentlemen and ladies eat too much. I made a calculation, and found I must have consumed some waggon-loads too much in the course of my life. Lock up the mouth, and you have gained the victory. I believe our friend, Lady Morley, has hit upon the right plan, in dining modestly at two. When we are absorbed in side-dishes, and perplexed with variety of wines, she sits amongst us, lightly flirting with a potato, in full possession of her faculties, and at liberty to make the best use of them,—a liberty, it must be owned, she does not neglect, for how agreeable she is! I like Lady Morley; she is what I call *good company*."

"Never was known such a summer as this; water is selling at threepence a pint. My cows drink beer, my horses ale."

"The French certainly understand the art of furnishing better than we do; the profusion of glass in their rooms gives such gaiety. I remember entering a room with glass all round it, at the French Embassy, and saw myself reflected on every side. I took it for a meeting of the clergy, and was delighted of course."

"In composing, as a general rule, run your pen through every other word you have written; you have no idea what vigour it will give your style."

Speaking of heroism: "I have always said that the heroism and courage of men is nothing in comparison with these qualities as they are developed in women. Women cannot face danger accompanied with noise, and smoke, and hallooing; but in all kinds of serene peril and quiet horror they have infinitely more philosophical endurance than men. Put a woman in a boat on a boisterous sea; let six or seven people make as much noise as they can, and she is in a state of inconceivable agony. Ask this same woman, in a serene summer's evening, when all nature is at rest, to drink a cup of poison for some good which would accrue from it to her husband and children, and she will swallow it like green tea."

Addressing an idle correspondent: "I know (or rather, did know) the pangs of letter-writing; but now I am arrived at a tolerable fluency in written nonsense, and will not scold you."

The conversation turning on ——, I forget who, it was said so well, "There is the same difference between their tongues as between the hour and the minute hand; one goes ten times as fast, and the other signifies ten times as much."

"I think no house is well fitted up in the country without people of all ages. There should be an old man or woman to pet; a parrot, a child, a monkey:—something, as the French say, to love and to despise. I have just bought a parrot, to keep my servants in good humour."

"No, I don't like dogs; I always expect them to go mad. A lady asked me once for a motto for her dog Spot. I proposed, 'Out, damned Spot!' but strange to say, she did not think it sentimental enough. You remember the story of the French marquise, who, when her pet lap-dog bit a piece out of her footman's leg, exclaimed, 'Ah, poor little beast! I hope it won't make him sick.' I called one day on Mrs ——, and her lap-dog flew at my leg and bit it. After pitying her dog, like the French marquise, she did all she could to comfort me, by assuring me the dog was a Dissenter, and hated the Church, and was brought up in a Tory family. But whether the bite came from madness or Dissent, I knew myself too well to neglect it; and went on the instant to a surgeon and had it cut out, making a mem. on the way to enter that house no more."

"If you want to make much of a small income, always ask your-

self these two questions:—first, do I really want it? secondly, can I do without it? These two questions, answered honestly, will double your fortune. I have always inculcated it in my family."

"Lady —— is a remarkably clever, agreeable woman, but Nature has made one trifling omission—a heart; I do like a little heart, I must confess."

"I never was asked in all my life to be a trustee or an executor. No one believes that I can be a plodding man of business, as mindful of its dry details as the gravest and most stupid man alive."

"I have heard that one of the American ministers in this country was so oppressed by the numbers of his countrymen applying for introductions, that he was obliged at last to set up sham Sydney Smiths and false Macaulays. But they can't have been good counterfeits; for a most respectable American, on his return home, was heard describing Sydney Smith as a thin, grave, dull, old fellow; and as to Macaulay (said he), I never met a more silent man in all my life!"

Talking of Mrs ——: "She has not very clear ideas, though, about the tides. I remember, at a large party at —— House, her insisting that it was always high tide at London Bridge at twelve o'clock. She referred to me: 'Now, Mr Smith, is it not so?' I answered, 'It used not to be so, I believe, formerly, but perhaps the Lord Mayor and Aldermen have altered it lately.'"

"Mr —— once came to see us in Yorkshire; and he was so small and so active, he looked exactly like a little spirit running about in a kind of undress without a body."

Speaking of a robbery: "It is Bacon, I think, who says so beautifully, 'He that robs in darkness breaks God's lock.' How fine that is!"

Of Mr ——: "Yes, I honour him for his talents and character, and his misfortunes have softened the little asperities of his manner, and made him much more agreeable. Tears are the waters of the heart."

"People complain of their servants: I never had a bad one; but then I study their comforts, that is one recipe for securing good servants."*

"Dante, in his 'Purgatorio,' would have assigned five hundred years of *assenting* to ——, and as many to —— of *praising* his fellow-creatures."

"I have divided mankind into classes. There is the Noodle,—very numerous, but well known. The Affliction-woman,—a valuable member of society, generally an ancient spinster, or distant relation of the family, in small circumstances: the moment she

* He hardly ever lost a servant but from marriage or death.

hears of any accident or distress in the family, she sets off, packs up her little bag, and is immediately established there, to comfort, flatter, fetch, and carry. The Up-takers,—a class of people who only see through their fingers' ends, and go through a room taking up and touching everything, however visible and however tender. The Clearers,—who begin at the dish before them, and go on picking or tasting till it is cleared, however large the company, small the supply, and rare the contents. The Sheep-walkers,—those who never deviate from the beaten track, who think as their fathers have thought since the flood, who start from a new idea as they would from guilt. The Lemon-squeezers of society,—people who act on you as a wet-blanket, who see a cloud in the sunshine, the nails of the coffin in the ribbons of the bride, predictors of evil, extinguishers of hope; who, where there are two sides, see only the worst,—people whose very look curdles the milk, and sets your teeth on edge. The Let-well-aloners,—cousins-german to the Noodle, yet a variety; people who have begun to think and to act, but are timid, and afraid to try their wings, and tremble at the sound of their own footsteps as they advance, and think it safer to stand still. Then the Washerwomen,—very numerous, who exclaim, 'Well! as sure as ever I put on my best bonnet, it is certain to rain,' &c. There are many more, but I forget them.

"Oh, yes! there is another class, as you say; people who are always treading on your gouty foot, or talking in your deaf ear, or asking you to give them something with your lame hand, stirring up your weak point, rubbing your sore, &c."

On joining us in the drawing-room, and sitting down to the tea-table: "Thank God for tea! What would the world do without tea? how did it exist? I am glad I was not born before tea. I can drink any quantity when I have not tasted wine; otherwise I am haunted by blue-devils by day, and dragons by night. If you want to improve your understanding, drink coffee. Sir James Mackintosh used to say, he believed the difference between one man and another was produced by the quantity of coffee he drank."

"O'Connell presented me to the Irish members as the powerful and entertaining advocate of the Irish Catholic claims."

Talking of the ardour of country gentlemen for preserving game: "I believe —— would die for his game. He is truly a pheasant-minded man; he revenged himself upon me by telling all the Joe Millers he could find as my jokes."

"Oh, the Dean of —— deserves to be preached to death by wild curates."

"The advice I sent to the Bishop of New Zealand, when he had to receive the cannibal chiefs there, was to say to them, 'I deeply

regret, Sirs, to have nothing on my own table suited to your tastes, but you will find plenty of cold curate and roasted clergyman on the sideboard;' and if, in spite of this prudent provision, his visitors should end their repast by eating him likewise, why I could only add; 'I sincerely hoped he would disagree with them.' In this last sentiment he must cordially have agreed with me; and, upon the whole, he must have considered it a useful hint, and would take it kindly. Don't you think so?"

"I am old, but I certainly have not that sign of old age, extolling the past at the expense of the present. On the contrary, the progress of the world in the last fifty years almost takes my breath away. Steam and electricity have advanced it beyond the dreams of the wildest visionary two hundred years ago. By the bye, on the subject of steam, I have a most curious letter, which I extracted from a periodical, and will show you; it struck me as so interesting, that I made inquiries about it from the author of the publication, and have some reason to believe it is authentic.

Letter of Marion de Lorme to the Marquis de Cinq-Mars.

Paris, February, 1641.

"My dear Effiart,

"While you are forgetting me at Narbonne, and giving yourself up to the pleasures of the Court, and the delight of thwarting M. le Cardinal de Richelieu, I, according to your express desire, am doing the honours of Paris to your English Lord the Marquis of Worcester; and I carry him about, or rather he carries me, from curiosity to curiosity, choosing always the most grave and serious, speaking little, listening with extreme attention, and fixing on those whom he interrogates two large blue eyes, which seem to pierce to the very centre of their thoughts. He is remarkable for never being satisfied with any explanations which are given him, and he never sees things in the light in which they are shown to him; you may judge of this by a visit we made together to Bicêtre, where he imagined he had discovered a genius in a madman.

"If this madman had not been actually raving, I verily believe your Marquis would have entreated his liberty, and have carried him off to London, in order to hear his extravagances from morning till night, at his ease. We were crossing the court of the madhouse, and I, more dead than alive with fright, kept close to my companion's side, when a frightful face appeared behind some immense bars, and a hoarse voice exclaimed, 'I am not mad! I am not mad! I have made a discovery which would enrich the country that adopted it.' 'What has he discovered?' asked our guide. 'Oh!' he answered, shrugging his shoulders, 'something trifling enough: you would never guess it; it is the use of the steam

of boiling water.' I began to laugh. 'This man,' continued the keeper, 'is named Salomon de Caus; he came from Normandy four years ago, to present to the King a statement of the wonderful effects that might be produced from his invention. To listen to him, you would imagine that with steam you could navigate ships, move carriages; in fact, there is no end to the miracles which, he insists upon it, could be performed. The Cardinal sent the madman away without listening to him. Salomon de Caus, far from being discouraged, followed the Cardinal wherever he went with the most determined perseverance, who, tired of finding him for ever in his path, and annoyed at his folly, shut him up in Bicêtre, where he has now been for three years and a half, and where, as you hear, he calls out to every visitor that he is not mad, but that he has made a valuable discovery. He has even written a book on the subject, which I have here.'*

"Lord Worcester, who had listened to this account with much interest, after reflecting a time, asked for the book, of which, after having read several pages, he said, 'This man is not mad; in my country, instead of shutting him up, he would have been rewarded. Take me to him, for I should like to ask him some questions.' He was accordingly conducted to his cell; but, after a time, he came back sad and thoughtful. 'He is *indeed* mad now,' said he; 'misfortune and captivity have alienated his reason; but it is you who have to answer for his madness; when you cast him into that cell, you confined the greatest genius of the age.' After this we went away, and since that time he has done nothing but talk of Salomon de Caus."

"I destroy, on principle, all letters to me, but I have no secrets myself. I should not care if almost every word I have written were published at Charing Cross. I live with open windows."

"This is a noble description of God's omnipresence (turning over the leaves of a book), 'His centre is everywhere, His circumference is nowhere.'"

Talking of New Year's Day and Christmas: "No, the return of those fixed periods always makes me melancholy. I am glad when we have fairly turned the corner, and started afresh. I feel, like my friend Mackintosh, 'there is another child of Time lost,' as the year departs.

"What a loss you had in not knowing Mackintosh! how was it? . . . Yes, his manner was cold; his shake of the hand came under the genus 'mort-main;' but his heart was overflowing with benevolence. I like that simile I made on him in my letter, of 'a great ship cutting its cable;'—it is fine, and it well described Mackintosh.

* This book is entitled, 'Les Raisons des Forces mouvantes, avec diverses machines tant utiles que puissantes.' (Pub. 1615, in folio.)

His chief foible was indiscriminate praise. I amused myself the other day," said he, laughing, "in writing a termination of a speech for him; would you like to hear it? I will read it to you:—

"'It is impossible to conclude these observations without expressing the obligations I am under to a person in a much more humble scene of life,—I mean, Sir, the hackney-coachman by whom I have been driven to this meeting. To pass safely through the streets of a crowded metropolis must require, on the part of the driver, no common assemblage of qualities. He must have caution without timidity, activity without precipitation, and courage without rashness; he must have a clear perception of his object, and a dexterous use of his means. I can safely say of the individual in question, that, for a moderate reward, he has displayed unwearied skill; and to him I shall never forget that I owe unfractured integrity of limb, exemption from pain, and perhaps prolongation of existence.

"'Nor can I pass over the encouraging cheerfulness with which I was received by the waiter, nor the useful blaze of light communicated by the link-boys, as I descended from the carriage. It was with no common pleasure that I remarked in these men, not the mercenary bustle of venal service, but the genuine effusions of untutored benevolence: not the rapacity of subordinate agency, but the alacrity of humble friendship. What may not be said of a country where all the little accidents of life bring forth the hidden qualities of the heart,—where her vehicles are driven, her streets illumined, and her bells answered, by men teeming with all the refinements of civilised life?

"'I cannot conclude, Sir, without thanking you for the very clear and distinct manner in which you have announced the proposition on which we are to vote. It is but common justice to add, that public assemblies rarely witness articulation so perfect, language so select, and a manner so eminently remarkable for everything that is kind, impartial, and just.'"*

At ten we always went down-stairs to prayers, in the library. Immediately, if we were alone, appeared the "farmer" at the door, lantern in hand. "David, bring me my coat and stick;" and off he set with him, summer and winter, to visit his horses, and see that they were all well fed, and comfortable in their regions for the night. He kept up this custom all his life.

On returning to the drawing-room, he usually asked for a little music. "If I were to begin life again, I would devote much time

* This trifling critique on his old friend, good-humoured as it is, I should not have given without the permission of his family, who knew that Sir James, had he seen it, would have been the first to smile at it. I ought to add, that the same kind indulgence has been granted me wherever I have ventured on any anecdote that I feared might give pain.

to music. All musical people seem to me happy; it is the most engrossing pursuit; almost the only innocent and unpunished passion.

"Never give way to melancholy: nothing encroaches more; I fight against it vigorously.* One great remedy is, to take short views of life. Are you happy now? Are you likely to remain so till this evening? or next week? or next month? or next year? Then why destroy present happiness by distant misery, which may never come at all, or you may never live to see it? for every substantial grief has twenty shadows, and most of them shadows of your own making."

Speaking of ——: "It was a beautiful old age; how fine those lines of Waller are—.

> 'The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
> Let in new lights through chinks that Time has made!'"

"Yes; —— was merry, not wise. You know, a man of small understanding is merry where he can, not where he should. Lightning must, I think, be the wit of heaven."

Mr P—— said to him, "I always write best with an amanuensis." "Oh! but are you quite sure he puts down what you dictate, my dear P.?"

Speaking of a Revolutionist: "No man, I fear, can effect great benefits for his country without some sacrifice of the minor virtues."

"I often think what a different man I might have been if, like my friend Lord Holland, and others, I had had the advantage of passing my life with all that is most worth seeing and hearing in Europe, instead of being confined through the greater part of it to the society of the parish-clerk. I always feel when conversing that it is combating with unequal weapons; but I have made a tolerable fight of it, nevertheless. I am rather an admirer of O'Connell: he, it cannot be denied, has done a great deal for Ireland, and, on the whole, I believe he meant well; but 'hell,' as Johnson says, 'is paved with good intentions.'"

A little more of such talk, intermixed with those brilliant and amusing bursts of humour and attack,—which I see *prettily* compared, in one of the printed sketches of him, to "summer lightning, that never harmed the object illumined by its flash,"—and then to bed; and all was quiet, and at peace, in the little parsonage.

I have endeavoured here,—partly from recollection, partly from

* Yet I see, in his note-book,—"I wish I were of a more sanguine temperament; I always anticipate the worst."

my own and my friends' notes,—to give some faint idea of the style of my father's conversation and his manner of living with his family and friends. I flatter myself, by those who knew him intimately, it will not be thought an unfaithful copy. But, alas! without the look, the voice, the manner, the laugh, the thousand little delicate touches, the quick repartee, the connecting links from which these observations sprang,—without the master-spirit's voice to animate the whole,—without all this, I feel it is but a body without a soul. Yet, body as it is, to me it is most precious, as all that now remains to me of my father; and I would fain believe there are a few still alive who will accept this relic of a great man gone, with gratitude,—will live with him again in these pages,—will be reminded, by them, of him as he really *was*, and not as I have here imperfectly attempted to describe him.

CHAPTER XII.

Extract from Lady ——'s Journal—Last Illness—Comes to Town—Dr Chambers called in—Anxiety of Friends for his recovery—Meeting of Brothers—Living presented to a poor Clergyman—Death of Sydney Smith—Death of his eldest Brother.

I HAVE but little more to add; my (to me) sad tale is nearly told; but I will here insert some extracts from a journal of a dear Scotch friend, who spent a month in his house, which, though never meant to see the light, have most kindly been given to me at my request; I feel them to be valuable, not only because they are nearly the last notes I have of him (being taken the year before his death), but because they also, on many points, confirm, from notes taken at the moment, the traits I have given of him from mere recollection.

"'Do you not like the country?' 'I like London a great deal better; the study of men and women, better than trees and grass.'

"'Oh! some men are born happy. I often think what a fortunate circumstance it was for me, in going to Edinburgh (quite a stranger), to fall at once into intimacy with such remarkable men as Jeffrey and the rest.' 'How was it?' 'I went to Edinburgh with a pupil,—I had nothing else. Then the Edinburgh Review,—what a machine that has been!'

"'I love Jeffrey very dearly;' and, speaking of his knowledge of all subjects, and his view of Madame de Staël: 'I used to say then that the nearest thing Jeffrey had ever seen to a fine Parisian lady was John Playfair.' How we laughed at this!

"'Miss Edgeworth was delightful,—so clever and sensible! She does not say witty things, but there is such a perfume of wit runs through all her conversation as makes it very brilliant.'

"We walked home after church; he paid visits to the cottagers, speaking to them frankly and cheerily, or scolding them for not coming to tell him they were better, or that they wanted more medicine.

"'Nobody' (says a sketch in the 'Spectator,' written by some friend) 'too obscure for Sydney to put in good-humour with themselves.' Nay, I have seen him brighten the countenance of his poor parishioners for the day, by a captivating phrase or two, when

he met them, or visited their cottages. On one occasion, his parish-clerk being laid up with a broken shin, Sydney called to inquire. 'I 'm getting round, your honour, but I sha'n't be fit for duty on Sunday.' 'Sorry for that, Lovelace; indeed, we shall miss you at the singing.' Then, turning to me,—'You can't think what a good hand Lovelace is at a psalm; you should hear him lead off the Old Hundred.' At which the old clerk's eyes fairly glistened, and he stammered out, 'Oh! your honour's only saying that to cheer me up a bit.'

"Sometimes he had a good report to give of an absent son or daughter, whom he had seen in London, and obtained a place for. He employed many old people about the garden, and was anxious that everybody near him should be comfortable. 'Have you seen my doctor's shop? Come, I'll show it you.' I expressed my wonder. 'Yes, life is a difficult thing; here 's everything prepared,—stomach-warmers, sore-throat collars, &c. I studied medicine, and went through the hospitals at Edinburgh; I know a good deal. I often regret that medical men will not talk more of their profession. It is a very interesting subject to every one, at least a little of it; but I never can get any of them to speak,—they look quite offended.'

"The poor people and the servants are very fond of him; he does them so much good, and gives them clothes, books, medicines. They look to him for everything, and they like his free speaking to them; he is so merry and frank: so my maid tells me.

"He sometimes read aloud to Mrs Sydney and me in the evening, when anything struck him,—such as parts of Liebig,—so clearly and distinctly, observing shortly on parts as he read, and listening good-naturedly to our observations. We had each our arm-chair, lamp, and book in the evening, and not much conversation when alone. Occasionally he would sit with an air of profound meditation, and would begin as thus:—'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. That is new; that is peculiar to the Christian religion.' Or he would repeat the sublime prayers for the Queen, in his grand tones, to mark their fine composition.

"'I dine sometimes at ——, and the head of the bank sits at the foot of the table, looking so attentive, and bowing so obsequiously; and when I talk, *à tort et à travers*, as I am apt to do, I see by his expression that he says to himself, "There is a man I would not lend money to at fifteen per cent.; he 's a rash man; he would buy bad Exchequer bills; he is not to be trusted." He little knows me.' 'That is very true,' said Mrs Sydney; 'people are not aware that Sydney, with all his mirth, is one of the most cautious, prudent men that ever existed; he is always looking forward, and pro-

viding against what may happen.' 'Yes, I always expect the worst; but it has a good effect, for it makes me cautious.'

"'When I went to Edinburgh I had two introductions, to Sir William Forbes and Professor ——. He was clerk to the General Assembly of the Kirk. He said to me one day after dinner, "D—n the solemn league and covenant! it has spoiled the longs and shorts in Scotland."'

"'I like Dr Fergusson much. William Clerk is an original man; how rare it is to meet an original man!'

"'I wish sometimes that I were a Scotchman, to have people care about me so much.'

"'The Americans, I see, call me a Minor Canon. They are abusing me dreadfully to-day: they call me Xantippe; they might at least have known my sex; and they say I am eighty-four. I don't know how it is,' said he laughing, 'but everybody who behaves ill to me is sure to come to mischief before the year's out. I am not angry with them; I only say, I pity you, you are sure to suffer.'

"'Were you remarkable as a boy, Mr Smith?' 'Yes, Madam, I was a remarkably fat boy. I was at one time to have been a supercargo to China, to Hongkong.'

"'Here is a hymn-book that an old man of eighty-four sends me, he says, because of his pleasure in hearing of my giving the living of Edmonton to Tate's son. I should have been better pleased if it had not cost me a shilling.' 'Oh!' said Mrs Sydney, 'I would willingly have given a guinea for it.'

"'Here is an anonymous letter from some one who has a quantity of Mississippi bonds, asking me what he should do with them. How can I tell? they are not worth sixpence.'

"That month every post brought letters to him, either of complaint of the Americans, of the income-tax, or of some evil, which the writers (strangers) entreated Mr Smith to write against, and to help them to remedy. There were also many feeling letters on the subject of his generosity to the family of Canon Tate. He could not conceive why the world praised him so much for that; he always spoke so simply about it, that it showed me how natural it was to his disposition to be kind and generous. He was evidently pleased by some of the newspapers' clever notices of his Letters to America. 'Well, they lay it on pretty thick to-day; where is Mrs Sydney?' He was perpetually coming to her with something for her sympathy or consultation; and richly did she deserve that happiness, from her devoted love and admiration. One day I pointed out an article in the 'Times,' of one who was reckoned the Sydney Smith of Spain: it amused him.

"'I had once a mind to write a letter to young bishops; bishops

I have known speak to their inferior clergy worse than they do to their footmen.' 'Why do you not, Mr Smith?' 'Oh, it would be a life of contention; I am too old to bear a life of contention now.'

"'There is a specimen of national honesty! read that marked with red ink.' 'Do you mean a joke?' 'No, no.' 'Do give me a sign.' 'Well, I'll sometimes give you a sign when there is no joke, and you 'll be sure to laugh. Frere used to tread on a man's toes to make him think he said something wrong. . . . When I was in Edinburgh, I said to a lady, speaking of the Dean of Faculty, that we thought our Deans in England had no faculties. She said, "Well, I call that a very good joke!"'

"'I hope somebody will tell me when I grow old and prosy; though I am not likely to get very prosy, I 'm in general so short.' 'Yes, too short, Mr Smith.'

"Christmas Day was one rich in recollections. The weather was fine. I looked out, and saw the maid Maria gravely and busily tying on oranges to the branches of the bay-trees that were planted in large green tubs round the lawn. The effect was gay and sunny, and pleased him mightily. The sermon that day was a glorious one;—on Christmas, the contrast of the world before the blessed era, and the sudden effect after,—gratitude, immortal life, &c. I hope the sermon is preserved. I cannot give a good account of all that was interesting at that time, of the children's feast, the schools, the prizes, the charities, &c.; but I remember my admiration of the variety of character which Mr Smith displayed that day. From the sublime duties of the morning, he became, with the large family-party assembled at dinner, the Sydney Smith of London society; and in the evening he was delightful. 'I crave for music, Mrs Smith; music! music!' He sang, with his sweet rich voice, 'A few gay soarings yet.' He imitated an orchestra preluding, talking French, telling stories, and laughing so infectiously. Next morning he was merrier than ever; I found the party all at breakfast, waiting till I came, before he would allow a *Scotch cake* to be touched, which my maid had prepared (bad enough). He had often asked me to suggest some improvement to his house, something new—(poor I could think of nothing new, but cakes made with soda and buttermilk!); it was this cake we were all to take the same chance of suffering from, by eating it together. 'Let us make a tontine for the survivor,' said he, laughing. It was wonderful how he played upon this cake, on me, and on Scottish luxuries; he fancied that I feared to be too comfortable. 'Oh, that easy couch! you 'll suffer for that a thousand years hence, depend upon it.'

"'Want of money is a great evil: I declare, every guinea I have gained I have been the happier. I was very poor till I was

appointed to St Paul's; that made me easy, and then my brother Courtenay's death made me rich.' An old friend congratulating him on his appointment to St Paul's: 'Why, I think it makes me most happy to feel I can now keep a carriage and horses for her, in her old age (pointing to Mrs Sydney), which I could not have done before.'

"'I once rode on a turtle five feet long, supported by two people: piety trampling luxury underfoot! Do you take it?'

"The first sermon I heard in Combe Florey church was certainly meant for my good: 'Cast your care upon God, for He careth for you.' It was so comforting and encouraging! With what delight did I look and listen, in that church, to the grand form and powerful countenance, noble and melodious voice! In reading the Lessons and Psalms, he read so as almost to make a commentary on every word, and the meaning came out so rich and deep. His sermons were not given in St Paul's with more interest and effect; and yet they were adapted to the congregation, from their plain and practical sense. Remembering him in St Paul's crowded cathedral, and looking at him in the little village church, filled with peasantry, I was pleased to see him always the same.

"I wish I could convey the idea of his appearance as he sat in the bay-window of the library, writing. I used sometimes, in walking past, to venture near, to look at him. There was power, profundity, and meaning in his countenance; and he would often take up his papers with an amused expression. I was convinced that he was a very happy man. I often regretted that I had no spirits or courage to speak to him, or to join him in his walks in the garden, but I have much respect for the silence of a great man.

"These memorandums seem very simple, but I wished to be able to recall to myself the looks and tones of one whom I had been accustomed to admire through much of my life; and I feel, when writing for *myself*, that my impressions are conveyed.

"On New Year's Day, we were walking in the garden; he discovered a crocus, which had burst through the frozen earth; he stopped suddenly, gazed at it silently for a few seconds, and, touching it with his staff, pronounced slowly and solemnly, 'The resurrection of the world!'"

To this pretty, simple journal I have little to add. Yet how different are the minds of men! An apple fell to the ground, and Sir Isaac Newton saw in it one of the great laws of nature. How many men would have passed that little crocus, and seen in it only a flower: whilst to my father's mind (not quite unworthy of this great ancestor) it brought at one glance to his thoughts all the wonderful effects the breath of life, which had gone forth, was pro-

ducing in every portion of the world, for man's benefit now, and was to produce on man himself in a world to come.

He saw but one resurrection upon earth more. In the spring he went up to London, as usual, for a short time; and whilst there, met, at the house of M. Van de Weyer, a literary man of some eminence who afterwards published a sketch of him in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," in which he introduced a short and humorous answer of my father's to him, not however intended for publication. My mother wishing to know some particulars of this from M. Van de Weyer, after my father's death, he had the kindness, amidst all the hurry of a sudden departure for Germany, to write out the following account of the transaction for her, which he has given me permission to insert.

"*June*, 1852.

"My dear Mrs Sydney Smith,

"I hasten, before our departure for Germany, to enclose, according to your wishes, several extracts from the letters which my poor friend Eugène Robin wrote to me on the subject of the article published by him in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes.'

"In 1844, Eugène Robin, who had left Brussels, where he had been educated, and had, at a very early age, distinguished himself, both as a poet and a critic, spent a few days with us in London; and, as he was anxious to know the best and most original writers of England, we had long conversations together on the works of Mr Sydney Smith, which I lent him, and for which he soon felt and expressed a great admiration. On the 22nd of April, I received from him the following letter:—

"'Vous vous souvenez peut-être de m'avoir parlé de la collection des écrits de Jeffrey et de Sydney Smith sur lesquels il y avait de bons articles à faire pour la 'Revue des Deux Mondes.' Le 'Jeffrey' a été traité par M. Forcade, dans la dernière livraison; mais le 'Sydney Smith' vient de m'échoir en partage. J'ai demandé le livre à Londres; mais je voudrais bien, comme vous connaissez intimement l'auteur, que vous eussiez la bonté, si vos loisirs vous le permettent, de me dire si ce sont là réellement tous ses ouvrages; de me donner (c'est bien indiscret de vous demander ces choses-là) sur l'homme et sur l'écrivian de ces détails qu'avec votre esprit d'observation, vous seul pouvez bien connaître. Ils ajouteraient singulièrement de prix à un travail fait avec conscience. J'ai le *pain* de mon article; j'attends de vous le *sel*. Pourquoi m'avez-vous encouragé à ne voir en vous que l'homme de lettres bienveillant pour ses jeunes confrères? Je ne vous importunerais pas de la sorte.'

"I immediately answered that I very much regretted not to be able to comply with his request, my very intimacy with Mr Sydney

Smith preventing me, without his consent, from sending for a Review any biographical anecdotes or critical observations on his life and writings; but advised M. Robin to write himself to Mr S. Smith, and I offered to deliver his letter, and to explain both *his* reasons for doing so, and *my* reasons for not acceding to his demand, and to obtain an answer for him. M. Robin sent me a charming letter (I regret that I have not kept a copy of it), for Mr Sydney Smith, who kindly approved of what I had said and done, and entrusted to my care an answer to Eugène Robin's letter.*

"More than two months elapsed before Eugène Robin acknowledged the receipt of this letter to me in the following words:—

"*Paris, le* 3 *Sept.*, 1844.

"'Vous avez bien voulu m'envoyer la lettre amicale et toujours spirituelle de votre ami le Révérend Sydney Smith. Elle m'a grandement encouragé à faire l'article dont je vous avais parlé; maintenant, ce travail est fini depuis plus de quinze jours; il n'y manque plus que quelques petits détails biographiques, qui, transmis par vous, selon le désir exprimé par M. Sydney Smith, relèveraient singulièrement mon récit et ma critique. Si vous vouliez faire un effort en faveur de l'aimable Chanoine de Saint-Paul, que ne vous devrais-je pas?'

"I have not kept a copy of my answer to him, the substance of which was communicated to Mr Sydney Smith. The article appeared soon after, and Mr Sydney Smith was informed of its publication by M. Robin. This letter was not sent through me: I heard of it by the two following notes from Mr Sydney Smith:—

"'*October* 21, 1844.

"'You may remember I wrote through you to Eugène Robin, giving, at his request, some account of myself. I have received a letter from him, stating that the Review is published, and that he has quoted a part of my letter. I confess this rather alarms me. Will it be putting you to an inconvenience if I beg the loan of the Review for two or three hours? I will deviate from my usual custom, and return it punctually.'

"'*October* 24.

"'I have received the Review by post, so I will not trouble you for yours.

"'Eugène has said more about me than I deserve. He is of himself a little long; but I am very much pleased and flattered by

* The letter, having been already published, is not given here.

the approbation of so clever a man. He had better not have quoted my letter; but there is no great harm. Yours,

"'SYDNEY SMITH.'

"We leave to-morrow. Believe me, my dear Mrs Sydney Smith, yours very faithfully,

"SYLVAIN VAN DE WEYER."

During the summer of this year, he received many of his old friends; and, amongst others, his eldest and now only brother, Robert, Mr Hallam, and Mr Everett, the American minister. Of this visit I find this touching notice in a letter of Mr Everett's to my mother, on receiving the volume of posthumous sermons she published:—

"One of them I heard him preach in his little village church at Combe Florey. The reading of it brings back to me, in the freshest recollection, that delightful visit,—one of the brightest spots in my English residence,—though I am painfully affected by considering that the two great men whose society I then enjoyed are gone; men who, in their peculiar paths of eminence, have not left their equals behind them." On another occasion Mr Everett says:—"The first remark that I made to myself, after listening to Mr Sydney Smith's conversation, was, that if he had not been known as the wittiest man of his day, he would have been accounted one of the wisest."

My father opened his house for a month to that poor, interesting family for whom he had interceded with so much success with Sir Robert Peel, and who were pining for a little fresh air. Amongst these was a clever, imaginative little boy, by whom he was much interested. Every evening he examined into his conduct during the day; and, if blameless, sent him to bed with a large red wafer stuck in the middle of his forehead as a reward. The Order of the Garter could not have made the child more proud. Once only, during his visit, did he forfeit the red wafer, and went sobbing and broken-hearted to bed; having been convicted, first, of cutting off the whiskers of Muff, Annie Kay's favourite cat; and last, though not least, meddling with the poetical salad when dressed. Such crimes could not, of course, be pardoned!

My father went, for a short time, in the autumn, to the sea-side, complaining much of languor. He said, "I feel so weak, both in body and mind, that I verily believe, if the knife were put into my hand, I should not have strength or energy enough to stick it into a Dissenter."

In October my father was taken seriously ill; and Dr Holland

went down immediately to Combe Florey, and advised his coming up to town, where he might be constantly under his care. He soon after followed this advice, and bore the journey well; and, for the first two months, though very weak, went out in his carriage every day, saw his friends, broke out into moments of his natural gaiety, when he occasionally felt less suffering, saying one day, with his bright smile, to General Fox (when they were keeping him on very low diet, and not allowing him any meat), "Ah, Charles! I wish I were allowed even the wing of a roasted butterfly;" and he was at times so like his former self, that, though Dr Holland was uneasy about him, we could not give up hope.

But other and more urgent symptoms coming on, Dr Holland became so anxious, that he begged that Dr Chambers might be called in. My father most unwillingly consented,—not from any dislike of Dr Chambers, but from having the most perfect confidence in Dr Holland's care and skill.

That evening he, for the first time, told his old maid and nurse, Annie Kay, that he knew his danger; said where and how he should wish to be buried; then spoke of us all, but told her we must cheer him, and keep up his spirits, if he lingered long. But he had such a dread of sorrowful faces around him, and of inflicting pain, that to us he always spoke calmly and cheerfully, and as if unaware of his danger.

He now never left his bed. Though suffering much, he was gentle, calm, and patient; and sometimes even cheerful. He spoke but little. Once he said to me, taking my hand, "I should like to get well, if it were only to please Dr Holland; it would, I know, make him so happy; this illness has endeared him so much to me."

Speaking once of the extraordinary interest that had been evinced by his friends for his recovery (for the inquiries at his door were incessant),—"It gives me pleasure, I own," he said, "as it shows I have not misused the powers entrusted to me." But he was most touched by the following letter from Lady Grey to my mother, expressing the feelings towards him of one of the friends he most loved and honoured,—one who was, like himself, lying on that bed from which he was never to rise, and who was speaking as it were his farewell before entering on eternity.

"Lord Grey is intensely anxious about him. There is nobody of whom he so constantly thinks; nobody whom, in the course of his own long illness, he so ardently wished to see. Need I add, dear Mrs Sydney, that, excepting only our children, there is nobody for whom we both feel so sincere an affection. God knows how truly I feel for your anxiety. Who is so sadly entitled to do so as I am? But I will hope the best, and that we may both be blessed by seeing the person most dear to us restored to health."

One evening, when the room was half-darkened, and he had been resting long in silence, and I thought him asleep, he suddenly burst forth, in a voice so strong and full that it startled us,—

"We talk of human life as a journey, but how variously is that journey performed! There are some who come forth girt, and shod, and mantled, to walk on velvet lawns and smooth terraces, where every gale is arrested, and every beam is tempered. There are others who walk on the Alpine paths of life, against driving misery, and through stormy sorrows, over sharp afflictions; walk with bare feet, and naked breast, jaded, mangled, and chilled."

And then he sank into perfect silence again. In quoting this beautiful passage from his sermon on riches, his mind seems to have turned to the long and hard struggles of his own early life.

The present painful struggle did not last many days longer. He often lay silent and lost in thought, then spoke a few words of kindness to those around. He seemed to meet death with that calmness which the memory of a well-spent life, and trust in the mercy of God, can alone give.

Almost the last person he saw was his favourite and now only-surviving brother, Bobus; and nothing could be more affecting than to see these two brothers thus parting on the brink of the grave; for my dear uncle only left my father's deathbed to lie down in his own,—literally fulfilling the petition my father so touchingly made to him in one of his early letters, on hearing of his illness, "to take care of himself, and wait for him,"—and before the end of a fortnight had followed him to the grave.

"*Heslington*, 1813.

"Dear Bobus,

"Pray take care of yourself. We shall both be a brown infragrant powder in thirty or forty years. Let us contrive to last out for the same, or nearly the same time. Weary will the latter half of my pilgrimage be, if you leave me in the lurch.

"Ever your affectionate brother,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Of the genius, learning, and virtue that were lost to the world in that grave, I dare not attempt to speak; it belongs to other and abler pens than mine to tell; but to me my uncle's death was as the death of a second father,—the extinction of all I have ever known or conceived that was brightest and best in the world.

A very eminent man, who had the rare privilege of associating intimately with my uncle, writes of him to Sir Henry Holland:—"I never knew a mind with so gigantic a grasp. Our talk when alone was always most serious."

These beautiful and characteristic lines were found in my uncle's desk, supposed to have been composed by him shortly before his death :—

"'Hîc jacet!'—O humanarum meta ultima rerum!
Ultra quam labor et luctus curæque quiescunt,
Ultra quam penduntur opes et gloria flocci;
Et redit ad nihilum vana hæc et turbida vita:
Ut te respicerent homines! Quæ bella per orbem,
Qui motus animorum et quanta pericula nostra
Acciperent facilem sine cæde et sanguine finem!
Tu mihi versare ante oculos, non tristis imago,
Sed monitrix, ut me ipse regam, domus hæc mihi cum sit
Vestibulum tumuli, et senii penultima sedes."

"'Hîc jacet!'—O last goal of human things, beyond which labour and mourning and cares are at rest,—beyond which riches and glory are weighed as nothing, and this vain and turbid life returns to nought! Oh that men would thus regard thee! What wars throughout the world, what passions of the soul, how many dangers besetting us, might so obtain an easy termination without slaughter or blood! Mayest thou be present before my eyes, not a mournful image, but an admonisher, that I should regulate myself; since this house is to me the vestibule of the tomb, and the *next to closing* seat of my old age!"

My father died at peace with himself and with all the world; anxious, to the last, to promote the comfort and happiness of others. Acting on the beautiful precept of our Saviour, a precept he had often remarked as peculiar to Christianity alone, he sent messages of kindness and forgiveness to the few he thought had injured him in life. Almost his last act was bestowing a small living of £120 per annum on a poor, worthy, and friendless clergyman, who had lived a long life of struggle with poverty on £40 per annum.* Full of happiness and gratitude, he entreated he might be allowed to see my father; but the latter so dreaded any agitation that he most unwillingly consented, saying, "Then he must not thank me; I am too weak to bear it." He entered,—my father gave him a few words of advice,—the clergyman silently pressed his hand, and blessed his deathbed. Surely such blessings are not given in vain!

My father expired on the 22d of February 1845,—his death caused by hydrothorax, or water on the chest, consequent upon disease of the heart, which had probably existed for a considerable time,

* In dictating a few words in his favour (for he was too weak to write) to the Bishop of Llandaff, he says:—"In addition to his other merits, I am sure he will have one in your eyes, for he is an out-and-out Tory." So little did party-feelings influence my father in bestowing preferment!

but rapidly increased during the few months preceding his death. His son closed his eyes. He was buried, by his own desire, as privately as possible, in the cemetery of Kensal Green; where his eldest son, Douglas, and now my mother, repose by his side.

And if true greatness consists, as my dear and valued old friend Mr Rogers once quoted here from an ancient Greek writer, "in doing what deserves to be written, and writing what deserves to be read, and in making mankind happier and better for your life," my father was a truly great and good man.

Here I shall insert two most touching letters from his friend Lord Jeffrey,—the one on the occasion of his long, last illness, and the other on receiving the fragment on the Irish Church, after my father's death. I give them with the more pleasure, as they not only furnish fresh proof of the tenderness and kindness of Lord Jeffrey's nature, but afford ample testimony to the devotion and admiration he bore my father, and which my father's deep love for him so fully deserved. To my regret, this has been almost passed over, or barely alluded to, in the Life lately published of Lord Jeffrey.

"*Edinburgh, Feb.* 10*th*, 1845.

"My dear Saba,

"I do not know when I have felt more moved and delighted, than when Professor Pillans came into my room yesterday with a short letter from our beloved Sydney (but in his wife's handwriting), cheerfully written; and saying, among other things, and in substance, that he 'looked forward to his recovery, and at all events was making very valuable progress:' I think those were the words. I need not tell you how sad we have all been about him, nor what a gloom the accounts we have lately received have thrown over the circle of his ancient friends. While that lasted, I for one at least had not courage to distress you by any inquiry; but this letter has excited a less painful anxiety, and I hope you will forgive me for the trouble it leads me to give you. You cannot over-estimate the interest I take in the oldest and truest of my remaining friends; and I believe I may say the same of Murray. Do then, my dear child, let us know whether we may not hope again.

"And believe me always affectionately yours,

"F. JEFFREY."

"*Haileybury College, Hertford, April* 21, 1845.

"My very dear Saba,

"I have felt several times in the last six weeks that I ought to have written to some of you; but in truth, my dear child, I had not the courage; and to-day it is not so much because I have the courage, as because I cannot help it.

"That startling and matchless Fragment was laid upon my table this morning; and before I had read out the first sentence, the real presence of my beloved and incomparable friend was so brought before me, in all his brilliancy, benevolence, and flashing decision, that I seemed again to hear his voice and read in his eye, and burst into an agony of crying. I went through the whole in the same state of feeling: my fancy kindled, and my intellect illumined, but my heart struck through with the sense of our loss, so suddenly and so deeply impressed by this seeming restoration.

"I do not think he ever wrote anything so good, and I feel mournfully that there is no one man alive who could have so written. The effect, I am persuaded, will be greater than from any of his other publications: it is a voice from the grave. And it may truly be said that those who will not listen to it, would not be persuaded though one were to rise from the dead.

"It relieves me to say all this, and you must forgive it. Heaven bless you, my dear child! With kind remembrances from all here,

"Ever very affectionately yours,

"F. JEFFREY."

My mother's anxiety to have a Memoir written of my father had induced her to apply very soon after his death to Mr Moore, for his able assistance; but upon further consideration it was thought the event was then too recent; and before sufficient materials could be collected for the purpose, Mr Moore's health rendered the task impossible. The following letter refers to my mother's request to Lord Jeffrey to contribute his recollections of my father.

"*June* 14, 1845.

"My dear Mrs Smith,

"I do not systematically destroy my letters, but I take no care of them, and very few, I fear, have been preserved. I shall make a search, however, and send you all I can. I was very glad to hear, some time ago, that Moore had agreed to assist in preparing the memorial, about which you are naturally so much interested. He will do it, I am sure, in a right spirit, and with the feeling which we are all anxious to see brought to its execution. Then he writes gracefully, is so great a favourite with the public, that the addition of his name cannot fail to be a great recommendation. If it occurs to me, on reflection, that there is anything I can contribute in the way you suggest, I shall be most happy to have my name once more associated with his on such an occasion. You know it must always be a pleasure to me to comply with any request of yours;

and the form in which you wish this to be done, is certainly that which I should prefer to any other. Yet the models to which you refer, might *well* deter me from attempting anything that might lead to comparison.*

"I am glad to think of you at Munden,† rather than in Green Street, in this charming weather; and beg to be most kindly remembered there to my beloved Emily and all her belongings.

"I have not had much to boast of in the way of health since my return, but have still been well enough hitherto to get through with my work. We are fixed here now, I think, pretty much till winter, and expect to be joined by Charley, and her infant, in a fortnight.

"With kindest regards,

"Ever very affectionately yours,

"*Craigcrook.*" "F. JEFFREY."

"*Derby.*

"My dear Mrs Sydney,

"Your kind note of the 12th came to me at the Euston Hotel this morning, when I was in the act of sallying forth to join the train which brought me here two hours ago. So you see I could not possibly thank you any earlier for your kind inquiries, nor gratify myself by the interesting pilgrimage to Green Street, which I should otherwise have undertaken with such a deep devotion of feeling. I hope yet to live, however, to commune with my heart at that shrine.‡ I am glad that Eddis has been so successful. For calm and true expression, and the rendering of what is moral, rather than passionate, in our natures, I think he is the first of our living artists. I have indeed been very ill and recover but slowly, though I have little actual suffering, and hope to be a little less feeble and shabby yet before I die. Notwithstanding, I have no anxiety, nor low spirits, though the animal vitality is at times low enough, God knows. My affections and the enjoyment of beautiful nature, I thank Heaven, are as fresh and lively as in the first poetical days of my youth, and with these there is nothing very miserable in the infirmity of age. We are taking two of our grandchildren down with us, and I hope to have the whole household reunited at Craigcrook, on the first days of July. They are all (except the poor patriarch who tells you so) in the full flush of health and gaiety, and would make a brightness in a darker home than mine.

"Give my true and tender love to my dear Emily. I often think of her in her early home at Foston, and in that still earlier

* Sydney's Letters to the Editors of Sir J. Mackintosh and Mr Horner's Memoirs.

† Mr Hibbert's house in Hertfordshire.

‡ A portrait of my father, which Mr Eddis had just painted for my mother.

Yorkshire home, where she tempted me to expose myself on the jackass.*

"With kind remembrances to Hibbert and all his descendants, God bless you all, and always.

"Very affectionately yours,

"F. JEFFREY."

Hints on Female Education.

Though the subject of education is now much more generally studied and understood than it was formerly, yet the following slight hints, written at the request of a very young mother, when my father was a very young man, may not be entirely without value and interest to some young mother now; and at least show how early he felt the value and importance of education to women. I received them too late to insert them in their proper place.

"I am afraid, my dear Madam, you will find in these few hints little which you have not already anticipated, and that their only merit will be, that intention of being useful to your children by which they are dictated. Your daughters will have a great deal to do, and you will have a great deal to superintend; and exertion on their part, and inspection on yours, will lose very much of their effects without a systematic distribution of time. I cannot compliment you with having been a great economist of life. In your own instance indeed it is not of much importance; but the education of your daughters ought to (and I am sure will) impose upon you a restraint of natural propensities. If you wish to be useful to them, you must be active, persevering, and systematic; you must lay out the day in regular plots and parterres; and toil and relax at intervals, fixed as much as your other affairs will permit. The consideration of religion may perhaps be brought too frequently before the minds of young people. Pleasure and consolation through life may be derived from a judicious religious education; a mistaken zeal may embitter the future days of a child with superstition, melancholy, and terror. Short prayers at rising and going to bed; a regular attendance at church; the precepts of a mother as a friend, sparingly and opportunely applied, appear to me to be the best kind of foundation for the superstructure of religion. It will be wise perhaps to teach them very early that Sunday is a day on which their ordinary studies should be laid aside, and others of a more serious nature attended to. What the religious books are which are to be put into the hands of children, you know best; but there

* See Narrative, p. 111.

are some which, when their understandings become more enlarged, your daughters should certainly read, such as . . .*

"God has made us with strong passions and little wisdom. To inspire the notion that infallible vengeance will be the consequence of every little deviation from our duty is to encourage melancholy and despair. Women have often ill-health and irritable nerves; they want moreover that strong coercion over the fancy which judgment exercises in the minds of men; hence they are apt to cloud their minds with secret fears and superstitious presentiments. Check, my dear Madam, as you value their future comfort, every appearance of this in your daughters; dispel that prophetic gloom which dives into futurity, to extract sorrow from days and years to come, and which considers its own unhappy visions as the decrees of Providence. We know nothing of to-morrow; our business is to be good and happy to-day.

"One of the great practical goods which Christianity is every day producing to society is that extreme attention to the necessities of the poor, for which this country is so remarkable. I hope you will give your daughters a taste for active interference of this kind; nothing makes a woman so amiable and respectable.

"I would keep from my daughters immoral books, sceptical books, and novels; from which last I except Sir C. Grandison. I confess I have a very great dread of novels; the general moral may be good, but they dwell on subjects and scenes which it appears to me it is the great object of female education to exclude. A woman's heart does not want softening; it is a strange composition of tears, sighs, sorrows, ecstasies, fears, smiles, &c. &c.;—a man is all flesh and blood.

"I hope at the proper time you will take your children into the world. It will please them, relieve them from that painful shyness and embarrassment inseparable from a retired life, and give them the fair chance they ought to have of settling to advantage.

"The accomplishments are of use, as they embellish and occupy the mind; but after all, they are subordinate points of education, and too much time may very easily be given to them. It is very agreeable to look at good drawings; it is very delightful to hear good music; but good sense, sound judgment, and cultivated understanding, are superior to everything else;—they make the good wife, the enlightened mother, the interesting companion. Do not suppose I am decrying accomplishments. I am only giving them their just rank, and guarding against that exclusive care and absorbent eagerness with which it is at present the fashion to cultivate them.

* Omitted, because, since this period, works fitted for the young have become so numerous and are so improved, that the list is of little use.

"You mean to give your girls a taste for reading. Nothing else can so well enable them to pass their lives with dignity, with innocence, and with interest. Let us go into detail, and see if we can chalk out a convenient plan for them. They must learn French; do you know enough of this language to instruct them, or must they have a master? If the latter, the grammar, pronunciation &c., will be his affair. In the choice of books it will be very much in your power to direct them; the first will be easy, and suitable to children in point of language; such books abound,—you cannot mistake them; then the whole field of French literature is open for you to select from. For example, when you think them old enough, and sufficiently acquainted with the language, let them read Bourdaloue and Massillon's Sermons, Bossuet's Oraisons Funèbres, Sermons of Father Elisée, as specimens of the sacred eloquence of the French; let them read some of the best plays of Pierre Corneille, Racine, Molière, Voltaire's tragedies, some of Boileau, particularly the Lutrin, the Henraide of Voltaire. Supposing they wish to read French history, always take care to make geography and chronology go hand in hand with history, without which it is nothing but a confused jumble of places and events. When they have read the history of Greece and Rome, they should not fail to read Plutarch's Lives; one of the most delightful books antiquity has left us. They will of course pay an early attention to the history of their own country, which they will find curiously detailed in Henry, philosophically in Hume, drily and accurately in Rapin. With the poets and dramatic writers of our own country you are as well acquainted as myself. I hope they will learn Italian. In arithmetic it does not appear to be of consequence that they should go far, not further perhaps than compound division; but I would certainly endeavour, by much practice, to make them very dexterous in the common operations of subtracting, multiplying, and adding. It is of great importance to give them correct notions in the common elements of geography and astronomy, and to make them quite at their ease in the use of maps;—this will be done in very little time. In the order of study, the acquirement of what is preparatory to general literature will first require your attention, as well as those which are of indispensable necessity; I mean writing, ciphering, French, geography, spelling, &c. When these first difficulties are got over, put them boldly on the Greek and Roman history in the mornings, and poetry or *belles lettres*—English or French—in the afternoons. Remark to them, encourage them to make their remarks to you; applaud, blame, encourage, and use every little pious artifice in your power to give them that sure, best, and happiest of all worldly attainments—a taste for literary improvement.

"I have recommended a division of studies into those of the morning and evening, because I think it can be very easily done without producing confusion, and it is tedious to dwell upon one subject for a whole day. If you can get them to read in a connected method, you will have gained a point of great importance. For example, Spenser precedes Dryden, Pope, &c.; and by following this order of precedence, you see the improvement of language, and remark how each poet is indebted to those who went before him. Voyages and travels, and the history of modern Europe, would exhaust the longest life. Botany they will be delighted with.

"I have given a list of some few books in the principal departments of knowledge, in case they should strike into any one of them. The truth is, it is not important what part of knowledge they love best. A woman who loves history, is not more respectable than a woman who loves natural philosophy; either will afford innocent, dignified, improving occupation. If they show no predilection, then give them one: if they do, follow it. We move most quickly to that point where we wish to go.

"Let your children see that you are sorry to restrain them, happy to indulge them. Confess your ignorance when they put questions to you which you cannot answer, and refer them elsewhere; and relax from your instruction and authority in proportion as your children want them less. I write positively, my dear Madam, to avoid the long and circuitous language of diffidence, not because I attach any value to my opinions.

"I have contented myself with general hints, because in writing on these subjects it is no very difficult thing to slip into a folio volume. I have omitted the mention of many things which I know you will do well, and have purposely introduced that of others where I have some apprehensions of you. If it were not to make you an offer unworthy of acceptance, I should say that my serious and most zealous advice is always at your command.

"Adieu, my dear Madam; take courage, exert yourself. If there be one sight on earth which commands interest, respect, and assistance from men, it is that of a good mother, who, under the providence of God, exerts her whole strength for the advantage and improvement of her children.

"Your most sincere well-wisher.

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Epitaph.

TO

SYDNEY SMITH,

ONE OF THE BEST OF MEN.

HIS TALENTS, THOUGH ADMITTED BY HIS CONTEMPORARIES TO BE GREAT,

WERE SURPASSED BY

HIS UNOSTENTATIOUS BENEVOLENCE, HIS FEARLESS LOVE OF TRUTH,

AND HIS ENDEAVOUR TO PROMOTE THE HAPPINESS OF MANKIND

BY RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

AND

BY RATIONAL FREEDOM.

HE WAS BORN THE 3RD OF JUNE, 1771;

HE BECAME CANON RESIDENTIARY OF ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, 1831;

HE DIED FEBRUARY THE 22ND, 1845.

[On the opposite side of the Tomb.]

DOUGLAS SMITH,

THE ELDEST SON OF THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH,

AND OF

CATHARINE AMELIA, HIS WIFE.

HE WAS BORN FEBRUARY 27, 1805; HE DIED APRIL 15, 1829.

HIS LIFE WAS BLAMELESS.

HIS DEATH WAS THE FIRST SORROW

HE EVER OCCASIONED HIS PARENTS,

BUT IT WAS DEEP AND LASTING.

LETTERS

OF

THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

EDITED BY

MRS. AUSTIN.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

IT is, I think, necessary to offer some explanation of the part I have taken in the selection and arrangement of the following Letters for the press.

It was in compliance with the earnest desire and repeated solicitations of Mrs Sydney Smith, that I undertook to edit the letters of her lamented husband, and to write a short Memoir, the materials for which she was to furnish. Flattered as I could not but be by her request, I was too sensible of my own incompetence to such a work to engage in it willingly; and it was not till I found that no more competent editor (or none whom she esteemed so) was willing and able to undertake the task, that I yielded to the affecting importunities of my revered friend.

Not long after I received the materials for the projected work, a dangerous illness left me in so shattered a state of health, that every exertion of mind or body was forbidden, and indeed impossible, to me; and I begged Mrs Smith to receive back the papers she had entrusted to my care. Still she urged me to wait. While I waited, she arrived before me at the goal which I had so nearly reached. Immediately after her death I sent the papers to Lady Holland, to whom they had been bequeathed by her mother, telling her, that as I had no hope of such a return to health as would enable me to bear the anxiety I should feel in writing a Memoir of her honoured father, I must definitely decline so grave a responsibility. I added, that if my services in the business of selecting and arranging the letters for the press were of any value, she might command them. I ventured to believe that my veneration for Mr Smith's character, my earnest desire to set forth those high and solid qualities which the brilliancy of his wit had partly concealed from the dazzled eyes of the public, and my religious care not to make him do after his death that which he never did in life—inflict causeless or envenomed wounds,—which might perhaps atone for deficiencies of which I was as sensible as any of his admirers could be.

I entirely concur with Lady Holland in the opinion, that the con-

ditions which alone can justify the publication of private letters are, "that they shall neither hurt the living, injure the dead, nor impair the reputation of the writer." Almost every contributor to this selection will therefore find that I have largely used my power (or rather fulfilled my duty) as Editor, and have omitted whatever I thought at variance with any one of these conditions. It is hardly necessary to say that not a word has been added.

Not only is the tacit compact which used to protect the intercourses of society now continually violated by the unauthorised publication of conversations and letters, but there are not wanting pretended champions of truth, who assert the claims of the public to be put in possession of all the transient impressions, the secret thoughts, the personal concerns, which an eminent man may have imparted to his intimate friends. Such claims are too preposterous to be discussed. They deserve only to be met by a peremptory rejection. Without the most absolute power of suppressing whatever I thought it inexpedient to publish, I could not have meddled with anything so sacred as private letters. I am persuaded that no person of honour or delicacy will regret the amusement which might perhaps have been purchased by treachery to the dead, or indifference to the feelings of the living.

In insisting, however, on the canons which ought to govern all editors of letters, let me, by no means, be understood to apply them specially to the letters of Sydney Smith. Few editors to whom so large a mass of private papers have been submitted, can say, as I can, with the strictest truth, that I have found nothing for which those who loved and honoured the writer need to blush. My opinion of Sydney Smith's great and noble qualities—his courage and magnanimity, his large humanity, his scorn of all meanness and all imposture, his rigid obedience to duty—was very high before. It is much higher now, that his inward life has been laid bare before me. He lived, as he says, in a house of glass. He was brave and frank in every utterance of his thoughts and feelings; yet, though I have found opinions to which I could not assent, and tastes which are entirely opposed to my own, I have not found a sentiment unworthy a man of sense, honour, and humanity. I have found no trace of a mean, an unkind, or an equivocal action.

So many sketches of Mr Sydney Smith's character have been written, and its more intimate parts are so vividly portrayed in his daughter's Memoir, that it would be worse than superfluous for me to attempt to add to them. I cannot however close a work which has long and anxiously engaged my attention, without adverting to a few of the points which have struck me during its progress.

If the interest of a life were proportioned to the traces it leaves behind, few would afford richer materials to the biographer than

that of Sydney Smith. But the field on which the champions of truth have to do battle is often obscure, the conflict doubtful, the victory unperceived till long after the combatants have ceased to exist. The story of their lives is marked by none of the striking incidents which mark the career of men of action.

To understand the full significance of such a life as Sydney Smith's, we must ask ourselves what he accomplished. That he was the acknowledged projector of the Edinburgh Review, one of the early guardians of its principles (as appears from some of his letters to Jeffrey), and one of its most distinguished and powerful contributors, would of itself afford a satisfactory answer to this question. It is clear that he himself, though no man was less inclined to overrate the value of his own productions, looked back with a just satisfaction on the influence of that journal on public opinion. In a letter to Lord Jeffrey, dated Foston, 1825, he says, "It must be to you, as I am sure it is to me, a great pleasure to see so many improvements taking place, and so many abuses destroyed ;—abuses upon which you, with cannon and mortars, and I, with sparrow shot, have been playing for so many years." And again, in a letter to Mrs Crowe (January 6, 1840) : "I printed my reviews to show that I had not passed my life merely in making jokes, but had made use of what little powers of pleasantry I might be endowed with, to discountenance bad, and to encourage liberal and wise principles."

This was his own view of his vocation. In order to estimate his success in it, to trace the operation of his mind on the public mind (and hence on the public affairs) of England, we ought to present a complete and accurate view of its state at the beginning of his career. Such a retrospect is out of the question here. But we may confidently affirm that every day more clearly shows the depth of stolid prejudices, stupid and malignant antipathies, and time-honoured abuses, out of which we have emerged.

Many of the giants Sydney Smith combated are not only slain, but almost forgotten; and thus the very completeness of his success tends to efface from the minds of the present generation the extent of their obligations to him. But it ought never to be forgotten that, at the time he buckled on his armour, all these had nearly undisputed possession of the field. To combat them was then a service of real danger. The men who now float on the easy and rapid current of reform are apt, in the intoxication of their own facile triumphs, to forget the difficulties and the perils which their predecessors had to encounter. Those who now represent the most conservative opinions would then have passed for rash and dangerous innovators; reforms long since accomplished would then have been regarded as visionary or dangerous. The French Re-

volution—the fruitful parent of evils, of which no eye can yet discern the termination—had then utterly disordered the minds of men; agitated by the wildest expectations of good, or terrors of evil, to result from that explosion of undisciplined popular will. It was in the midst of this universal frenzy and panic, that Sydney Smith's clear and sound understanding, neither dazzled by visions of impracticable good, nor alarmed by shadows of imaginary evil, seized upon those principles of which he was through life the dauntless and inflexible advocate.

Much has been said of the extraordinary faculties which he brought to this undertaking; yet the power which he exercised over the public mind, when his own powers were roused, has hardly been sufficiently insisted on. What other private gentleman of our day, unconnected with Parliament, without office, rank, or fortune, has been able, by a few pages from his pen, to electrify the country as he did by the publication of "Peter Plymley's Letters"? Or to excite the feelings of two nations, as he did, by his letters to the Americans? Or to fight, single-handed, against the combined power of the Ministry and of the dignitaries of the Church, a battle in which he carried public opinion along with him? If such were the effects produced by one in so obscure a situation, what might he not have effected if placed in a position to exercise a more direct influence on the councils and affairs of the country?

He was a giant when roused, and the goad which roused him was Injustice. He was clear from envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness, and incapable of any littleness. He was ever ready to defend the weak. He showed as much zeal in saving a poor village boy, as in aiding a Minister of State. His hatred of every form of cant and affectation was only equalled by his prompt and unerring detection of it. Without admitting that the vice of hypocrisy is peculiarly English, we must confess that some of the forms which simulated virtue assumes in this country are not only, in common with all simulations, offensive to the love of truth, but are peculiarly repulsive to good sense and good taste. And there never was a man in whom they were calculated to excite more disgust than the brave, frank, and high-spirited gentleman whose letters are before us. For in him a passion for truth was enlightened by the utmost perspicacity of mind, and the most acute sense of the ludicrous and unseemly.

It must also be constantly borne in mine that Mr Sydney Smith did not regard Christianity as an ascetic religion, but as a religion of peace, and joy, and comfort. We say this, not in justification of the view, which it would be wholly out of place to discuss here, but of the consistency of him who held it. It was in perfect conformity with this belief, that he encouraged every social pleasure

and every taste for innocent enjoyment. These things he regarded not as lamentable concessions to the demands of a sinful nature, but as praiseworthy endeavours to mitigate the evils and sufferings of humanity, and hence in perfect harmony with the character and designs of a benevolent Creator.

It is needless to insist on the generous audacity with which he formed and held his opinions, or the gallantry with which he threw himself into the breach to assert an unpopular truth, which others were "too timid to express for themselves."* All this is familiar. But we see also that the boldness and vigour with which he proclaimed his opinions were wholly without the tenacity or irritability of self-love: "You know that a short argument often convinces me," he says to Lord Grey. And, again, where he mentions Sir Robert Peel's projected repeal of the Corn Laws, how candidly he avows his present disapprobation of that measure!—how open is his mind to arguments in its favour! There is something as magnanimous as it is rare in this union of fearless candour with openness to conviction.

When we consider the tremendous weapons with which he came armed into the world,—what powers he possessed of inflicting pain, and of adorning falsehood or immorality with the dazzling gems of his wit, we cannot withhold from him a feeling of gratitude for the generous and indulgent temper which led him to spare the weak, and for the high principle and taste which kept the precious talent entrusted to him pure, bright, and untainted. Never was wit so little addressed to the malignant, base, or impure passions of mankind. To this his Letters, poured forth out of the abundance of his fearless heart and high spirits, bear ample evidence.

Lastly, I have been much struck with the perfect arrangement and symmetry of his life. He is never the sport of circumstances; but throughout the battle of life we find him determined to do his duty in whatever circumstances it shall please God to place him. This determination he carried into the most trifling details of domestic life. Whatever he did, he did it with all his might. Nothing was neglected, slurred over, or left to chance. The order in which he kept his accounts might serve as a model to any man of business; and we have seen with what energy he introduced the same order into the affairs of the Chapter of which he was a member.

This is no place for a dissertation on his literary merits. Yet I can hardly omit to remark how entirely they bore the stamp of his character. Never was the saying, "le style c'est l'homme," more applicable. Prompt, fearless, natural and easy, going straightforward to the object, there is no laborious research or timorous hesita-

* See letter to Mr Bedford, of Bristol, January 13, 1829.

tion as to the words in which falsehood shall be exposed, or truth uttered. He was little indebted to books. His vigorous mind and fertile imagination supplied him with all he wanted; and the manliness of his character gave force and freedom to all he wrote.

The following remarks on Mr Sydney Smith's style, by Sir Henry Holland, which were given to me by Mrs Sydney Smith, are so just and discriminating, that I have begged permission to print them. They were called forth by these words, which I had quoted from the letter of a friend:—"If Mr Sydney Smith had not been the greatest and most brilliant of wits, he would have been the most remarkable man of his time for a sound and vigorous understanding and great reasoning powers; and if he had not been distinguished for these, he would have been the most eminent and the purest writer of English."

"Mrs Austin's friend," says Sir Henry Holland, "has admirably denoted the three eminent peculiarities of Mr Sydney Smith's writings—his vigorous sense, his wit, and the pure and masculine English of his style. The latter quality has scarcely been sufficiently noticed in comments on his works. Those higher qualities of reason and of humour have tended, it may be, to keep it out of sight.

"I should be inclined to note two other peculiarities of his writings, which have not been enough dwelt upon. One of these is, the *suddenness* with which he enters on his subject. No distant approaches by preface or dissertation. He plunges at once into his argument, and never loiters or lingers in it when he has compassed his conclusion. In no case does he drain a subject to the dregs, but always leaves his readers lamenting that he has come to an end.

"The other peculiarity (akin to the former, and often exceedingly happy in its effect) is what may be termed the *unexpectedness* of his manner of writing. He does not bind himself down to any servile rules of composition, or formal methods of argument. You always feel him to be a free and unshackled inquirer. He passes abruptly from one part of his subject to another, and, as suddenly, from exquisite wit to the gravest and most profound reason.

"He was in truth equally fearless in the manner and method of his works, as in the opinions and conclusions it was his object to enforce."

High as Mr Sydney Smith's reputation stood during his life, it has unquestionably risen since his death. If not more wide-spread, it is more just, and more worthy of his great moral and intellectual qualities. Still more perfect justice will, doubtless, be rendered to him by posterity. Admiration of his wit will become subordinate,

as it ought to be, to respect for the purposes to which it was applied, and for the good sense by which it was guided.

Already this appreciation has begun. And it is worthy of remark that the hasty and unregarded productions of his pen which were only saved from the flames by the pious hand of affection, have tended greatly to raise his reputation as a sound and original thinker.

There is one other point upon which I feel bound by gratitude to touch. Within our times, no man has done so much to obtain for women toleration for the exercise of their understandings and for the culture of their talents, as Sydney Smith. Others have uttered louder complaints, and have put forward loftier claims, on their behalf. But in this, as in all his demands for reform, Sydney Smith kept within the bounds of the safe and the possible. To those who knew him it is unnecessary to declare that he had no desire to convert women into pedants, to divest them of any of the attributes or attractions of their sex, or to engage in the vain attempt to create for them a new and independent position in society.

What he asked for women was, opportunity and encouragement to make themselves the intelligent companions of men of sense; or to furnish themselves with ideas and pursuits which might give interest to lives otherwise insipid and barren. These demands, consonant with nature and reason, he urged in a way to disarm opposition and vanquish prejudice. Sydney Smith was too completely above cant and imposture to deny the influence and the value of youth and beauty. But he laboured to induce women to acquire some substitutes for beauty, some resources against old age, some power of commanding attention and respect when the victorious charms of youth have fled. A new era in the moral and intellectual condition of women dates from his Lectures at the Royal Institution. And though it is to be regretted that a task which might have worthily employed the most vigorous pen has devolved on female hands, it is by them, perhaps, that this tribute of respect, affection, and gratitude is most fitly paid.

SARAH AUSTIN.

Cromer, October 1854.

P.S.—I have generally omitted not only the usual formulæ at the conclusion of letters, but many continually recurring expressions of kindness and affection, friendly greetings, domestic news sought and communicated. They show his kindly recollections of great and small, but their repetition would occupy much space, and might become wearisome to the reader.

It is not pretended that the following Letters are of equal merit and importance. They are, on the contrary, very unequal. The great object I had in view in their selection was, to present a true and complete picture of the writer under his various aspects; to show that the formidable critic, the admired wit, the earnest and intrepid champion of truth and freedom, the man in whom honour, sincerity, and principle were paramount, was also full of kindly affections and generous indulgence; and did not think it a waste of time and wit to delight the weaker part of mankind—women and children—with his playful sallies. The Letters are intended as illustrations of a thoroughly genuine, unaffected, and many-sided character; and they bear the impress of the peculiar mood of the writer's mind, the peculiar circumstances by which he was surrounded, or the peculiar character and position of the person to whom they are addressed.

This was the view taken by Mrs Sydney Smith. "Enough there is," she says, in a letter to me, "to show the affectionate playfulness of his nature, his manly wisdom and goodness, and the calm and right-minded view he takes of politics and of human affairs in general. His honesty and his candour are also on every suitable occasion displayed, so we want nothing more for his just portraiture."

If, in my ignorance of facts or persons referred to in these Letters, I have suffered any allusion to pass which can give the slightest pain, I can only say it is not alone unintentional, but completely at variance with my intentions. Whatever be the faults of the selection, I beg that it may be distinctly understood that they are to be imputed to me; and that no portion of the responsibility rests on Lady Holland. She has been so good as to continue to me the confidence which her mother was pleased to repose in me, and my choice (out of the materials furnished to me) has been free.

Lady Holland has most appropriately dedicated her Memoir to the memory of her mother. Be it permitted to me to add my respectful tribute to that faithful and devoted spirit which has inspired and directed my humble labours. To me, the foregoing selection will always appear her work. But for her entire confidence in the claims of him she had loved and revered through life,—a confidence which no discouragements could shake,—this volume would probably never have existed. It was she who collected, transcribed, and arranged the mass of letters out of which I had to choose, and who never could be brought to believe that the public would be indifferent (as many thought) to such a life, or unimproved by such an example. If I have anything to congratulate myself upon, it is, that I never, for a moment, doubted she was right.

Not that I was blind to the difficulties. Mr Sydney Smith had

long enjoyed a reputation perfectly unmatched for a gift the most dazzling, and the most evanescent of all intellectual gifts. Those who had heard him talk, felt with a sort of despair, how pale a shadow of the reality any description of him must inevitably be. Many, if not most, of his surviving friends and associates looked coldly on the project: and it seemed to be the general opinion that there was "nothing to tell," and that any attempt to draw an enduring portrait of the most brilliant of conversers would be a failure.

But all this was no answer to one who rested his claims to the admiration and respect of mankind on far higher qualities. To convey to others her own conviction of his eminent virtues, was the one remaining deep and earnest purpose of her life. Nothing could be more affecting and more venerable than this resolute struggle of a loving heart with the difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of its pious wishes. Her pride in her husband was only equalled by her humility about herself: and nothing could persuade her that she was competent to do what she so intensely longed to see done. I may, I hope, be excused for quoting a few sentences from the many touching letters I received from Mrs Sydney Smith, while this struggle was going on.

I am encouraged to do this by some words from one of the few surviving early friends of Mr Sydney Smith; one whose opinion is entitled to the utmost deference—Lord Murray. "If," he says, "you could add anything to what you have already said in your Preface* respecting Mrs Sydney Smith's urgent desire that some account of her husband's life should be written, you would no way exceed the truth; for it was a matter constantly weighing on her mind during the last years of her life. Lady Holland must therefore have felt herself bound, as a matter of duty, to do what she has done."

In December 1845, Mrs Sydney Smith wrote to me:—"Most persons, of whose good sense and discretion I have a high estimate, think that any little Memoir, illustrated by genuine letters, it would be yet too soon to publish. I confess it is foregoing the last gratification that remains to me—the hope of seeing that published of him, which to me far exceeds all the brilliancy of head that the world took cognizance of, but which I least valued; well knowing what the world knew not, the perfection of his heart, and his fearless love of truth. If delayed, I can never hope to see it: but I am not so selfish as for an instant to oppose my own gratification to that which is deemed expedient for his sake. Much did I wish Lord Jeffrey to have done this, but his age and infirmities press too hardly upon him now."

In March 1846, she writes:—"I shall never see the completion

* To the unpublished edition.

of the Memoir it would have been such an unspeakable satisfaction to me to see perfected. Some, the best judging perhaps, say *it is too soon*, as the letters and incidents relate to many living persons. I have therefore yielded up the great and now only remaining delight I could have felt, at the suggestion of the wiser and more fastidious of my friends; in the meantime I go on collecting."

In June 1849, I received the following letter:—

"My dear Mrs Austin,

"I hardly know how to make my request, so sensible am I to the liberty I am about to take with you; but to waste no more of your time in words, I will at once state my earnest desire.

"*Much more* that is excellent of my dear husband is deserving of notice than is derivable from his 'Works;' yet who will record it? Of his great talents he has himself taken care: of these, no one doubts. Of the far more admirable qualities of his mind and heart, the world knows nothing! His play-fellows are almost all gone. Who that well knew him, and is capable of appreciating him, will undertake the task? . . .

"I prefer writing, rather than saying my wishes to you, because it will be less painful to you to write 'No' than to speak it, should my anxious desire prove objectionable to you."

After repeated endeavours on my part to induce Mrs Sydney to seek some more competent Editor, I received a letter containing these words:—"My days, I suspect, cannot be many, and thence my urgency. Pray attribute it to the real motive—the desire to see that done which shall fill up the measure of my wishes. I have arranged his letters by the years and months, so that he indirectly tells the incidents of his own life. But now comes my own incapacity. I think every word he ever wrote so precious, that my better judgment is blinded, and I should not be able to erase a line or a thought. Here I greatly want one on whose just perception, on whose right feelings of affectionate regard not only for him, but for his fame, I can implicitly rely."

But though she speaks of her incapacity, the following passage from a subsequent letter shows what a just and distinct conception she had formed of what ought to be attempted:—

"An eventless life must be made up of character, of comments by friends, of a narrative of the immense difficulties through which, without interest, without connections, with the heavy weight of poverty on his shoulders, he dared bravely and honestly, and at all hazards, to struggle against bigotry, and every kind of abuse that militated against human happiness, but which struggle was sure to lessen his own chance of success.

"Such mixed materials cannot come up to the magnitude of his deserts; yet if it be the *only* thing that remains to his survivors to do, that the memory of so much that was admirable and affectionate in private life, as well as great and noble in the wider range of human interests (which he ever strenuously advocated) may not perish, it is surely expedient that it should be done. It is only in the fulness and freshness of familiar correspondence that are illustrated the genuine feelings and character."

Such were the influences under which I undertook my task. Fortunately for the public, ill-health prevented my attempting the more important part of it, which has thus fallen into the only hands competent to do it justice. The humbler portion which I retained has been executed with constant reference to the wishes and opinions of her from whom I received my commission, and to whom, though departed, I have never ceased to consider myself responsible.

SARAH AUSTIN.

Weybridge, May 21st, 1855.

LETTERS.

1.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Broomsgrove, 1801.

My dear Jeffrey,

Why so modest as to stand for a place in Scotland? Who humbled you into a notion that you were sufficiently destitute of probity, originality, and talents to enjoy a chance of success? I left you with far more adequate conceptions of yourself,—with *ingentes animos angusto in corpore;* I left you with a permanent and ingenuous blush for your venal city, and in a short month you deem yourself qualified in corruption to be a candidate for its honours.*

Many thanks, my dear Jeffrey, for the pleasant expressions of goodwill your letter contains. The friendship of worthy, sensible men I look upon as the greatest blessing of life. I have always felt myself flattered that you did not consider my society beneath your attention.

I think to be at Edinburgh about the end of August. We will pass many evenings together, arguing and joking, amidst eating and drinking! above all, being stupid when we feel inclined,—a rare privilege of friendship, of which I am frequently glad to avail myself. It will cost me much to tear myself away from Scotland, which however I must do when the fulness of time is come. I shall be like a full-grown tree transplanted,—deadly sick at first, with bare and ragged fibres, shorn of many a root!

Remember me to the aged Horner, and the more aged Seymour: I love these sages well. I think Leyden had better take Scotch preferment first, which will leave his chance for Indian appointments *in statu quo*, and put a hundred pounds a year in his pocket. I cannot imagine that your despondency in your profession can be rational; but however, you know *that* profession, and I know you, and when we meet, it will make a good talk over hyson.

Remember me to little —— ——; she is a clever little girl, but

* This was written during the dictatorship of Dundas (afterwards Lord Melville).

full of indiscretion, and inattentive to women, which is a bad style of manners.

Parr I know perfectly well; his conversation is infinitely beyond his books, as his fame is beyond his merits. Mackintosh is coming to Edinburgh, I believe, where I suppose you will see him.

My dear Jeffrey, Mrs S. sends her best compliments.

SYDNEY SMITH.

2.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

July, 1801.

My dear Jeffrey,

After a vertigo of one fortnight in London, I am undergoing that species of hybernation, or suspended vitality, called a pleasant fortnight in the country. I behave myself quietly and decently, as becomes a corpse, and hope to regain the rational and immortal part of my composition about the 20th of this month.

Nothing has pleased me more in London than the conversation of Mackintosh. I never saw so theoretical a head which contained so much practical understanding. He has lived much among various men with great observation, and has always tried his profound moral speculations by the experience of life. He has not contracted in the world a lazy contempt for theorists, nor in the closet a peevish impatience of that grossness and corruptibility of mankind, which are ever marring the schemes of secluded benevolence. He does not wish for the *best* in politics or morals, but for the best which can be attained; and what that is he seems to know well. Now what *I* object to Scotch philosophers in general is, that they reason upon man as they would upon a divinity; they pursue truth, without caring if it be *useful* truth. They are more fond of disputing on mind and matter than on anything which can have a reference to the real world, inhabited by real men, women, and children; a philosopher that descends to the present state of things is debased in their estimation. Look amongst our friends in Edinburgh, and see if there be not some truth in this. I do not speak of great prominent literary personages, but of the mass of reflecting men in Scotland.

Mackintosh is going to India as lecturer; I wish you could find a similar situation in that country, but not before *I* leave Scotland. I think it would be more to your taste than the Scotch Bar; and yet you want nothing to be a great lawyer; and nothing to be a great speaker, but a deeper voice, slower and more simple utterance, more humility of face and neck, and a greater contempt for *esprit*, than men who *have so much* in general attain to.

I have not the least idea when I shall return to Edinburgh; I

hope, the beginning of August. There seems to be no belief in invasion, and none in plots, which are now become so ridiculous that every one laughs at them.

Read Parr's sermon, and tell me how you like it. I think it dull, with occasional passages of eloquence. His notes are very entertaining. You will find in them a great compliment to my brother.

SYDNEY SMITH.

3.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Burntisland, June, 1802.

My dear Jeffrey,

With the inculpative part of *your* criticisms on *mine* I very much agree; and, in particular, am so well aware of that excessive levity into which I am apt to run, that I think I shall correct it.

Upon the point of *severity*, I beg you to recollect the facts. That —— is a very stupid and a very contemptible fellow no one pretends to deny. He has been hangman for these ten years to all the poor authors in England, is generally considered to be hired by Government, and has talked about Social Order till he has talked himself into £600 or £700 per annum. That there can be a fairer object for critical severity I cannot conceive; and though he be not notorious in Edinburgh, he is certainly so in London. If you think that the violence of the attack may induce the generality of readers to sympathise with the sufferer rather than with the executioner, in spite of the recollection that the artificer of death is perishing by his own art, *then* your objections to my criticism are good, for the very opposite reason to that you have alleged; *not* because they are too severe, but because, by diminishing the malice of the reader, they do not attain the maximum of severity.

You say the readers will think my review long. Probably. If it is amusing, they will not: if it is dull, I am sorry for it,—but I can write no better. I am so desirous of attacking this time-serving ——, that I cannot consent to omit this article, unless my associates consider their moral and religious characters committed by it; at the same time, I will, with great pleasure, attempt to modify it.

I am very much obliged to you for your animadversions on my inaccuracies, and should be obliged to you also to correct them. One of the instances you mention is rather awkward than incorrect, but had better be amended. I wrote my views exactly as you see them; though I certainly made these blunders, not in consequence of neglect, but in spite of attention.

I will come over soon if I can, not to detect Scotticisms, but to

enjoy the company of Scotchmen. Just now I am expecting Dugald Stewart and his spouse.

I have been so very bitter lately against authors, and find so much of the *infusum amarum* still remaining in my style, that I am afraid you will not think my answer to your expostulation a very gracious one. If you do think so, pray think otherwise; you cannot be too candid with me. You will very often find me too vain for correction, but never so blind to the value of a frank and manly character as not to feel real gratitude, when it consults my good, by pointing out my errors.

SYDNEY SMITH.

4.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Tuxford, 1803.

My dear Jeffrey,

Your very kind letter I received at the very moment of departure. I left Edinburgh with great heaviness of heart; I knew what I was leaving, and was ignorant to what I was going. My good fortune will be very great, if I should ever again fall into the society of so many liberal, correct, and instructed men, and live with them on such terms of friendship as I have done with you, and you know whom, at Edinburgh. I cannot see what obligations you are under to me; but I have so little objection to your thinking so, that I certainly shall not attempt to undeceive you in that opinion, or in any other which is likely to make you think of me more frequently or more kindly.

I have found the country everywhere full of spirit, and you are the only male despondent I have yet met with. Every one else speaks of the subjugation of England as of the subjugation of the Minotaur, or any other history in the mythological dictionary. God bless you, my dear Jeffrey! I shall always feel a pride and happiness in calling myself, and in showing myself, your friend.

S. S.

P.S.—I beg leave to except the Tuxford waiter, who desponds exactly as you do.

5.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

No date: about 1803.

Dear Jeffrey,

Though Mrs Jeffrey will not let you come for any length of time, will she not permit you to come for two days, if we give bond to

send you back on Wednesday? Pray reply to this interrogation by return of post, and in the affirmative if you can. I beg leave to disagree both with Horner and yourself about "Etymologicon Magnum," which I think written with great spirit and dexterity of manner, and with acuteness and justness in point of argument. I think some of your expressions incorrect, but you are not too civil by a single bow or smile; you have your imagination in very good order through the whole of it, and I exhort you to think extremely well of your power of writing—a task which, I trust, you will not find very unpleasant or difficult. The other subjects of your note I will reserve till we meet.

SYDNEY SMITH.

6.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

77 *Upper Guildford Street,*
November 30, 1803.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have the pleasure of informing you that it is the universal opinion of all the cleverest men I have met with here, that our Review is uncommonly well done, and that it is perhaps the first in Europe. I shall return with a million compliments, and some offers of assistance. I have thoroughly talked over the matter with ——, and shall give you the result of our conversation.

If any book enjoys a greater reputation here than you can conjecture it would from its title, we may send you information of it; and for a monthly search for foreign books you may depend upon us.

I will stop such books as I want myself; but you had better give Horner a caution against stopping more books than he wants, as he is a sort of literary tiger, whose den is strewed with ten times more victims than he can devour.

Your journey to India must entirely depend upon the influence of Mackintosh with Government upon literary topics; he is much inclined to befriend you; but the whole business is in a very glimmering state, and you must not think much about it.

We are all well. I have been spending three or four days in Oxford in a contested election; Horner went down with me, and was much entertained. I was so delighted with Oxford after my long absence, that I almost resolved to pass the long vacation there with my family, amid the shades of the trees and the silence of the monasteries. Horner is to come down too: will you join us? We would settle the fate of nations, and believe ourselves (as all three

or four men who live together do) the sole repositories of knowledge, liberality, and acuteness.

I will endeavour to send you a sheet as soon as possible, but cannot do so as soon as you mention.

SYDNEY SMITH.

7.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London (no date, but either 1803 *or* 1804).
8 Doughty Street.

My dear Jeffrey,

I send you all that you are to expect from me. The geographical names, which are so badly written, you will be able to decipher by the assistance of Tooke's "Survey of the Russian Empire;" you will exercise your editorial functions of blotting and correcting at full liberty. In my last letter I objected strongly to hackney writers; I do so still; perhaps I shall be able, in course of time, to discover some very useful coadjutors above this rank.

Everybody speaks in high terms of the Review, and deprecates any idea of its extinction; strain every nerve to keep it up; it will give you reputation.

Playfair has supped with me. Of Horner business has prevented me from seeing much; he lives very high up in Gordon Court, and thinks a good deal about mankind; I have a great veneration and affection for him, and depend upon him for a good deal of my society. Yours kindly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

8.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London (no date, presumed 1803 *or* 1804).

My dear Jeffrey,

I believe I have transmitted to you, for this number, as much as will make two sheets, which was the amount I promised. I would have been better than my promise, but for reasons unfortunately too good. We shall be most truly glad to see you in England, but what will become of the articles in your absence? for, situated as you are, your whole life is a crisis.

Mrs Sydney is pretty well and slowly recovering from her shock,* of which your kindness and your experience enable you to ascertain the violence. Children are horribly insecure: the life of a parent is the life of a gambler.

* The loss of her infant son.

I have seen Erskine. Murray will tell you how he appears to me; but a man coming from Dunse to London is of course stunned, and he must be a very impudent or a very wonderful man if he is not. Do you know anybody who would go out Professor to a Russian University?—about £800 per annum, coals and candles gratis, and travelling expenses allowed, if sent to Siberia. A perfect deadness in the literary world. Your friend Mackintosh sails early in January, to the universal sorrow of his friends.

The Swintons are come to town, and are to bring me your portrait, as large as life I presume, as Mr Swinton says in his note, "I will put in my pocket a little parcel I have for you." You see I am as impertinent as ever, and I assure you, my dear Jeffrey, as affectionate towards you.

SYDNEY SMITH.

9.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London, 1804.

My dear Jeffrey,

I can hardly believe my own eyes when they inform me that I am up, dressed, and writing by eight o'clock in the morning; and as there is nobody near by whose perceptions I can rectify my own, the fact will probably be undecided through the whole of my letter. To put the question to an intellectual test, I have tried an act of memory, and endeavoured to form a distinct image of the editor of the Edinburgh Review; but he appears to me of a stature so incredibly small, that I cannot venture to say I am awake, and my mind in a healthy and vigorous state: however, you must take me as you find me. Talking of the Edinburgh Review, I hardly think the article on Dumont is much liked by those whose praise I should be most desirous you should obtain; though it conciliates the favour of men who are always ready to join in a declaration of war against all works of speculation and philosophical enterprise; but when I speak in dispraise of this article, I only contrast it with what you have done better; for, in spite of its errors (if any such there be), it would make the fortune of anybody else.

I certainly, my dear Jeffrey, in conjunction with the Knight of the Shaggy Eyebrows,* do protest against your increasing and unprofitable scepticism. I exhort you to restrain the violent tendency of your nature for analysis, and to cultivate synthetical propensities. What is virtue? What 's the use of truth? What 's the use of honour? What 's a guinea but a d——d yellow circle? The whole effort of your mind is to destroy. Because others build slightly and eagerly, you employ yourself in kicking down their

* Francis Horner, Esq.

houses, and contract a sort of aversion for the more honourable, useful, and difficult task of building well yourself.

I think you ought to know Horner too well by this time to expect his article on Malthus before you see it.

The satire against me I have not yet read. One of the charges against me is, I understand, that I am ugly; but this is a mere falsehood, and a plain proof that the gentleman never can have seen me. I certainly am the best-looking man concerned with the Review, and this John Murray * has been heard to say behind my back. Pray tell the said J. Murray that three ladies, apparently much agitated, have been here to inquire his direction, calling him a base, perfidious young man.

I am extremely sorry for poor Alison: he is a man of great delicacy, and will be hurt by the attack of this scoundrel. Dumont is certainly displeased with the Review. Most sincerely and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

10.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London, 1804 (*or* 1805).

—— —— is here, and will certainly settle in Scotland next winter. She is, for a woman, well-informed and very liberal: neither is she at all disagreeable; but the information of very plain women is so inconsiderable, that I agree with you in setting no very great store by it. I am no great physiognomist, nor have I much confidence in a science which pretends to discover the inside from the out; but where I have seen fine eyes, a beautiful complexion, grace and symmetry, in women, I have generally thought them amazingly well-informed and extremely philosophical. In contrary instances, seldom or ever. Is there any accounting for this?

John Playfair dined here yesterday, and met Whishaw. We had a pleasant day,—at least I had.

If I can meet with any one who I think will do for the Review, I will certainly stimulate him. Such a man is Malthus,—but you have many workmen of that stamp.

Tell Jus Thompson that Miss Fox thinks his review of Darwin one of the most sensible in the whole book. Exhort him also never to forget the battle of Galen's head, and that I shared with him the danger. God bless you, dear Jeffrey!

SYDNEY SMITH.

* Now a Lord of Session, and one of the few early and faithful friends of Sydney Smith still surviving.—ED.

11.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

No date, but believed about 1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

You are raving mad if you take the least notice of ——. Let nothing—not even the pleasantry and success of an answer you might write—tempt you to do it. It is quite out of his power to do you the least harm, and out of yours to do him any: he is perfectly invulnerable by his degradation, and, from the same cause, innoxious. I beg and entreat you to lay aside all thoughts of an answer.. I have read through his pamphlet, and never read such dull trash. What is the history of my escape?

I cannnot say I am much struck with your Reid. I do not quite agree with you in your observation upon the science of metaphysics, nor with the difference you have attempted to establish between observation and experiment; but there is in that article quite enough of acuteness, good sense, and good writing to render it an ornament to the work, the character of which will not, in my opinion, suffer by the present number. The two articles which pleased me most were Izarn and D'Agnesi; I suspect them both to be from Playfair. ——'s review is too coarse—some parts absolutely ungentlemanlike. The great horror of the review is the *ge* in *gelidus* being made long; I was forced to break it to Elmsley by degrees.

If I were to write on in the Review, I would certainly not conceal myself, but I am much afraid it may not be in my power. I am engaging in my profession, and determined to write a book. We shall be heartily glad to see you if you come here. You will take some time in getting acquainted with the R——s, but you will succeed at last, and they are really worth the trouble; but do not talk lightly before them on serious subjects,—you will terrify them to death. I shall always love Edinburgh very dearly. I know no man of whose understanding and principles I have a higher opinion than I have of yours. I will come and visit Edinburgh very often if I am ever rich, and I think it very likely one day or another I may live there entirely. I write with a bad headache, but I write speedily to remonstrate, in the strongest manner, against your pamphlet. I am sure John Murray will agree with me: my kindest regards to him; he is an admirable man. Adieu!

SYDNEY SMITH.

12.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

February, 1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

I thought you had entirely forgotten me, and was pleasing myself with the notion that you were rising in the world, that your income was tripling and quadrupling in value, and that you were going through the customary and concomitant process of shedding your old friends and the companions of your obscurity,—when, behold! your letter arrived, diminished your income, blunted your fame, and restored your character.

As for me, I am plagued to death with lectures, sermons, &c.; and am afraid I have rather overloaded myself. I got through my first course I think creditably; whether any better than creditably, others know better than myself. I have still ten to read, have written two upon wit and humour, and am proceeding to write three upon taste. What the subject of the others will be I know not. I wish I had your sanity and fertility at my elbow, to resort to in cases of dulness and difficulty.

I am extremely glad, however, upon the whole, that I have engaged in the thing, and think that it will do me good, and *hereafter* amuse me, when I have more leisure.

I have not seen much of your friend Bell,* but mean to see more of him. He is modest, amiable, and full of zeal and enterprise in his profession. I could not have conceived that anything could be so perfect and beautiful as his wax models. I saw one to-day which was quite the Apollo Belvidere of morbid anatomy.

Horner is a very happy man; his worth and talents are acknowledged by the world at a more early period than those of any independent and upright man I ever remember. He verifies an observation I have often made, that the world do not dislike originality, liberality, and independence so much as the *insulting arrogance* with which they are almost always accompanied. Now, Horner pleases the best judges, and does not offend the worst.

God bless you, my dear Jeffrey!—is the prayer of your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

13.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Doughty Street, April, 1805

My dear Jeffrey,

I should be very much obliged to you to transmit the enclosed testimonials to St Andrews, to pay for the degree, to send me word

* The late Sir Charles Bell.

how much you have paid for it, and I will repay you immediately. If there be any form neglected, then send us information how to proceed. The degree itself may be sent to me also, by the mail or post, according to its size. Pray do not neglect this affair, as the interests of a poor and respectable man depend upon it.

My lectures are just now at such an absurd pitch of celebrity, that I must lose a good deal of reputation before the public settles into a just equilibrium respecting them. I am most heartly ashamed of my own fame, because I am conscious I do not deserve it, and that the moment men of sense are provoked by the clamour to look into my claims, it will be at an end.

SYDNEY SMITH.

14.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Doughty Street, 1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

Many thanks to you for your goodness. My little boy is, thank God, recovered. I sat up with him for two nights, expecting every moment would be his last. My great effort was to keep up Mrs Sydney's spirits, in which I succeeded tolerably well. I will not exercise my profession of preaching commonplaces to you; I acknowledge your loss was a heavy calamity, for I can measure what you felt by what I felt for you.

You have raised up to yourself here, *individually*, a very high and solid reputation by your writings in the Edinburgh Review. You are said to be the ablest man in Scotland; and other dainty phrases are used about you, which show the effect you have produced. Mackintosh, ever anxious to bring men of merit into notice, is the loudest of your panegyrists, and the warmest of your admirers. I have now had an opportunity of appreciating the manner in which the Review is felt, and I do assure you it has acquired a most brilliant and extensive reputation.

Follow it up, by all means. On the first of every month, Horner and I will meet together, and order books for Edinburgh: this we can do from the monthly lists. In addition, we will scan the French booksellers' shops, and send you anything valuable, excepting a certain portion that we will reserve for ourselves. We will, in this division, be just and candid as we can; if you do not think us so, let us know. You will have the lists, and can order for yourselves any books not before ordered for you; many catalogue articles I will take, to avoid the expense of sending them backwards and forwards from Edinburgh to London: many I will send. The articles I shall review from No. 6 are "Iceland," Goldbering's

"Travels into Africa," and Ségur upon the "Influence of Women in Society." I shall not lose sight of the probability of procuring assistance; some, I am already asking for. You will not need from me more than two sheets, I presume. Pray tell me the names of the writers of this number. Mackintosh says there has been no such book upon Political Economy as Brougham's since the days of Adam Smith.

S. S.

15.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

1805.

My dear Jeffrey,

Many thanks to you for your attention to my diploma. When you send me a statement of expenses, I will give you a draft for the money; by statement, I mean amount.

I conclude my lectures next Saturday. Upon the whole, I think I have done myself some little good by them.

I think your last articles in the Edinburgh Review extremely able, and by no means inferior to what you have done before.

John Allen is come home, in very high favour with Lord and Lady Holland. They say he is, without exception, the best-tempered man that ever lived, very honourable, and of an understanding superior to most people; in short, they do him complete justice. He is very little altered, except that he appears to have some faint notions that all the world are not quite so honourable and excellent as himself. I have the highest respect for John Allen.

I wrote to Dugald Stewart, to tell him of a report which prevailed here, that the General Assembly had ordered him to drink a Scotch pint of hemlock, which he had done, discoursing about the gods to Playfair and Darcy!*

Best regards to Tim Thompson. When am I to see you again, and John Murray, and everybody in the North whom I love and respect?

SYDNEY SMITH.

16.] TO DR REEVE†—(Vienna).

8 *Doughty Street, Brunswick Square,*
October 29, 1805.

My dear Sir,

I suggested everything I could to Barnard; told him that

* Mrs Dugald Stewart.

† Dr Reeve was a pupil of Mr Martineau, an eminent surgeon at Norwich. He afterwards studied medicine at Edinburgh, where he enjoyed the friendship of Mr Sydney

you had made three distinct efforts to come home, and had been robbed as many times by armed chaplains of the Austrian army; that Dr De Roches had been wounded in the right glontean, and you yourself thrown into a smart tertian by your grief and anxiety. The committee will not *bind themselves* to make a new engagement with you, but I have no doubt you will secure your situation upon your return.

I will, in the meantime, do all I can to get you inserted in the list for spring, 1807, which comes out, I think, about May 1806.

I would advise you not to fling away this occasion, which is no despicable one, for a physician; because he must be a very clumsy gentleman if, in lecturing upon the moral and physical nature of man, he cannot take an opportunity of saying that he lives at No. 6 Chancery Lane, and that few people are equal to him in the cure of fevers. As to the improvement you get, my dear doctor, in travelling abroad, *credat Judæus!* You have seen a skull of a singular conformation at Dr Baumgarten's, and seen a toe in Suabia, which astonished you; but what, in the name of Dr Gregory, can you see in Germany of a therapeutic nature which you cannot see better in Scotland or here? You will do yourself more real good by superintending one woman of quality in London, than by drinking tea with all the German professors that ever existed.

All these events in Germany have not astonished me: I allowed Buonaparte twenty-eight days to knock both armies *clunes super caput* (as the vulgar have it), to conclude peace, make a speech to the Senate, and illuminate Paris. He is as rapid and as terrible as the lightning of God; would he were as transient! Ah! my dear doctor, you are of a profession which will endure for ever; no revolutions will put an end to Synochus and Synoche; but what will become of the spoils *we* gather from the earth? those cocks of ripe farina, on which the holy bough is placed—the tithes! Adieu—God bless you! I will watch over your interests, and if anything occur, write to you again.

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I think, upon reflection, you had better write a line to the committee, stating the impossibility of your coming home, though you strongly wish, and begging to be put on the list for spring, 1807. Add also that you will employ the intervening time in collecting materials for your lectures. Send it to me; never mind postage.

Smith, Mr Horner, and other founders of the Edinburgh Review, and was among the early contributors to that journal. At the time this letter was written, he was travelling on the Continent with his friend Dr De Roches, of Geneva, who had also studied at Edinburgh. Dr Reeve afterwards married the elder daughter of Mr John Taylor, of Norwich, and settled at that place. He died in the year 1814.—ED.

17.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

18 *Orchard Street, London*, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

I thank you for your kind and friendly letter, which gave me great pleasure. I am exempted at present from residence, as preacher to the Foundling Hospital; had it been otherwise, I could, I think, have lived very happily in the country, in armigeral, priestly, and swine-feeding society. I have given up the Royal Institution. My wife and children are well, and the world at present goes prosperously with me. I shall pass part of next summer at my living, and in all probability come over to Edinburgh. Sharp, Boddington, Philips, and Horner come into Parliament this session. I say nothing of foreign politics in the present state of the world: we live and hope only from quarter-day to quarter-day. I shall probably remain nearly in the state I am now in till next midsummer. I have not a thought beyond; perhaps it is rash to think so far. I have seen Stewart once; he seems tormented to death with friends, but he talked out about Paris very fairly and pleasantly.

Tell Murray that I was much struck with the politeness of Miss Markham the day after he went. In carving a partridge, I splashed her with gravy from head to foot; and though I saw three distinct brown rills of animal-juice trickling down her cheek, she had the complaisance to swear that not a drop had reached her! Such circumstances are the triumphs of civilised life.

I shall be truly happy to see you again. What do you mean by saying we shall meet soon? Have you any immediate thoughts of coming to London? Remember me kindly to Murray, Thomson, Alison, Playfair, &c. I am very glad you see so much of these latter personages. Tell Playfair I have presented the four copies of his book to four of the most beautiful women of my acquaintance, with his particular compliments and regards.

SYDNEY SMITH.

18.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard Street, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

You will be surprised, after my last letter, to hear from me so soon again, and that my assistance in the next number must be left doubtful. Some circumstances have occurred, of consequence only to myself, which will entirely occupy my time, and render it impossible to do the articles well, if I can do them at all. I have

to apologise to you for this apparent mutability, but I am quite certain you would justify me if you knew my reasons.

The present Administration have put nobody into Parliament: they are too strong to want clever young men.

I must be candid with you, my dear Jeffrey, and tell you that I do not like your article on the Scotch Courts; and with me think many persons whose opinions I am sure you would respect. I subscribe to none of your reasonings, hardly, about juries; and the manner in which you have done it is far from happy. You have made, too, some egregious mistakes about English law, pointed out to me by one of the first lawyers in the King's Bench. I like to tell you these things, because you never do so well as when you are humbled and frightened, and if you could be alarmed into the semblance of modesty, you would charm everybody; but remember my joke against you about the moon;—"D—n the solar system! bad light—planets too distant—pestered with comets—feeble contrivance;—could make a better with great ease."

I sincerly hope you will be up here in the spring. It is long since we met, and I want to talk over old and new times with you. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

19.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard Street, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

I saw, of course, a good deal of Timotheus while he was here. After breathing for a year the free air of London, his caution struck me as rather ludicrous; but I liked him very much: he is a very honest, good-natured, sensible man.

I have just blinked at the Review, and that is all. Constable has omitted to send quarterly tributes of reviews to Horner and to me;—to me, the original proposer of the Review, and to Horner, the frumentarious philosopher! If he is ever again guilty of a similar omission, he shall be pulled down from his present eminence.

The other day I went to the Panorama. There was near me a party consisting of one old and three young women; and what do you think was the subject of their conversation?—which was the handsomest, John or William Murray! I am not joking; it is really true, upon my honour. There seemed to be a decided majority in favour of John, on account of his fairness. William Murray will not believe it.

I don't know whether you agree with me about the present lan-

guage and divisions of intellectual philosophy. They appear to me to be in a most barbarous state, and to be found nowhere in a state of higher confusion and puzzle than in the "Intellectual Powers" of Dr Reid. I have got a little insight into metaphysics by these lectures of mine; and though I am not learned enough to cope with you, I think I could understand you, and make myself understood by you. Do you agree with Stewart in his doctrine of sleep?—in his belief of the existence of conceptions?—in his divisions between sensation and perception?—in the propriety of the language he holds about ideas gained by the senses? I do not. Tell me if you do; yes or no, *simpliciter.*

SYDNEY SMITH.

20.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

18 *Orchard Street, Dec.* 21, 1806.

My dear Jeffrey,

It gives me great pleasure to think of visiting Scotland in the summer; but the drawback will be, to leave my wife and children, which I assure you I am loath to do for a single day.

Brougham is just returned from Portugal. It is rumoured that he was laid hold of by the Inquisition, and singed with wax-tapers, on account of the Edinburgh Review. They were at first about to use flambeaux, conceiving him to be you; but, upon recurring to the notes they have made of your height, an error was discovered of two feet, and the lesser fires only administered!

If I should be inclined to write anything for the Edinburgh Review this time, what books remain vacant? Have the goodness to send me a list, or, if that be difficult, send me a list of what books are appropriated; and I will immediately determine upon some or none, and inform you of my determination. By what period must my task be completed, if I undertake it?

I am resolved to write some book, but I do not know what book. If I fail, I shall soon forget the ridicule; if I succeed, I shall never forget the praise. The pleasure of occupation I am sure of, and I hardly think my failure can be very complete.

I have totally forgotten the Prussian monarchy since the third day after its destruction; nor will I think of destruction till the battlements of Troy are falling round my head, and I see Neptune stirring up its foundations with his trident! Why should we be ravished and ruined daily?

SYDNEY SMITH.

21.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

No date: supposed 1807.

Dear Jeffrey,

Concerning the Review, I think the whole number exceedingly good. Playfair's article is very much liked, and does not owe its success to its attack upon a bishop against whom everybody sympathises, but has genuine merit. Were I to criticise it at all, I should say it was rather Doric. Brougham's is most able, and the censure amply merited. Locke's "Tennant" I should suspect to be very green and crude, though I have not yet read much of it. These are all the articles of which I have heard any opinion, or which I have noticed. There are several Scotticisms in Playfair's review. I like —— very much, without caring about meeting him. I think his subjects of charcoal and chalk are very inferior ones, and that there is a good deal of bad taste in him, though that is in some degree atoned for by his propensity to the good and the liberal. I have no alloy to mingle in my approbation of Playfair. Brown is an impracticable, excellent creature. Of —— I can really form no tolerable opinion: contrasting *him* with his high character; his ordinary nullity, with his occasional specimens of extraordinary penetration, fine taste, and comprehensive observation, I am puzzled to silence: he is a man whom I cannot make out. Brougham impresses me more and more with a notion of his talents and acquisitions. No change has happened to me in my prospects. I sincerely hope your journey to the country will quite re-establish Mrs Jeffrey's health; and I beg you will let me know in your next letter. There is nothing I long for so much as to pay you a visit in the North: the first acquisition of riches with which I am visited shall be consecrated to that object.

SYDNEY SMITH.

22.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

London, 1807.

My dear Jeffrey,

I may perhaps furnish you with a sheet this time. Nothing but illness or occupation will prevent me. It is not probable that these causes of interruption will occur, but I beg to provide against them in case they do. I wish you could give Constable a lecture respecting his inattention to the contributors to the Review. Everybody gets the Review before me by land-carriage, and I am defrauded with a sea Review: this is not right.

You take politics to heart more than any man I know; I do not

mean questions of party, but questions of national existence. I wish we lived in the same place, for many reasons; but, among others, that we might plan some publication which would not be useless. These things are not to be despised, though they are not equal in importance to questions respecting the existence of another world, &c.

I was much amused by hearing —— was at Lord Lauderdale's. I suppose a mutual treaty of peace was first signed, in which both surrendered part of their doctrines; or some mutual friend, skilled in political economy, stepped in,—probably Horner. Brougham, I am sorry to hear, does not come into Parliament by this vacancy, occasioned by Lord Howick's elevation to the peerage. His loss will be grievous to the Whigs.

Pray have the goodness to tell me, in your next letter, whether there is a man in Edinburgh whom you can recommend as an instructor of youth, in whose house a young Englishman could be safely deposited, without peril of marrying a Scotch girl with a fortune of 1*s.* 6*d.* sterling.

I humbly beseech you and earnestly exhort you to come to town this spring. You should revisit the metropolis more frequently than you do, on many accounts.

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I think you have spoilt many of my jokes; but this, I suppose, every writer thinks, whose works you alter; and I am unfortunately, as you know, the vainest and most irritable of human beings.

23.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

July 14, 1807.

My dear Lady Holland,

Mr Allen has mentioned to me the letters of a Mr Plymley, which I have obtained from the adjacent market-town, and read with some entertainment. My conjecture lies between three persons—Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir Arthur Pigott, or Mr Horner, for the name is evidently fictitious. I shall be very happy to hear your conjectures on this subject on Saturday, when I hope you will let me dine with you at Holland House, but I must sleep in town that night. I shall come to Holland House, unless I hear to the contrary, and will then answer Lord Holland's letter.

S. S.

24.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard Street, Nov. 18, 1807.

My dear Jeffrey,

If you have any pleasure in the gratification of your vanity, you may enjoy such pleasure as much as you please. You have no idea how high your works stand here, and what a reputation they have given to you. Your notions of the English Constitution delight the Tories beyond all belief; and you have now nearly atoned for D——'s opinions. The Whigs like that part of your review which attacks, or rather destroys, Cobbett; but shake their heads at your general political doctrine.

I am waiting to see who is to be my new master in York.* I care very little whether he make me reside or not, and shall take to grazing as quietly as Nebuchadnezzar!

SYDNEY SMITH.

25.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Bath, December 9, 1807.

War, my dear Lady Holland, is natural to women, as well as men —at least with their own sex!

A dreadful controversy has broken out in Bath, whether tea is most effectually sweetened by lump or pounded sugar; and the worst passions of the human mind are called into action by the pulverists and the lumpists. I have been pressed by ladies on both sides to speak in favour of their respective theories, at the Royal Institution, which I have promised to do.

In the meantime, my mind is agitated by the nicely-balanced force of opposite arguments, and I regret that peaceable bigotry which I enjoy in the metropolis, by living with men who are entirely agreed upon the greater part of the subjects which come under discussion. I shall regain my own tranquillity on Saturday night, and bid adieu to a controversy which is more remarkable for the ingenious reasoning by which it is upheld, than for the important results to which it leads.

The general idea here is, that we are upon the eve of reaping the good effects of the vigorous system of administration; and that the French, driven to the borders of insanity by the want of coffee, will rise and establish a family more favourable to the original mode of breakfasting. I have ventured to express doubts, but am immediately silenced as an Edinburgh Reviewer.

* The Archbishop, Dr Markham, was just dead. Dr Vernon, Bishop of Carlisle, succeeded.

I found "the preceding phenomenon" well; or, to speak more classically, everything about him referable to the sense of seeing excited the same ideas as before; the same with the co-effect, or sister. Allen would say, the co-sequence, but he is over rigid; in loose, familiar writing we may say, the co-effect; co-sequence looks (as it seems to me) stiff and affected.

SYDNEY SMITH.

26.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

8 *Doughty Street, Brunswick Square.*

My dear Lady Holland,

I told the little poet,* after the proper softenings of wine, dinner, flattery, repeating his verses, &c. &c., that a friend of mine wished to lend him some money, and I begged him to take it. The poet said that he had a very sacred and serious notion of the duties of independence, that he thought he had no right to be burdensome to others from the mere apprehensions of evil, and that he was in no immediate want. If it was necessary, he would ask me hereafter for the money without scruple; and that the knowing he *had* such resources in reserve, was a great comfort to him. This was very sensible and very honourable to him, nor had he the slightest feeling of affront on the subject, but, on the contrary, of great gratitude to his benefactor, whose name I did not mention, as the money was not received; I therefore cancel your draft, and will call upon you, if he calls upon me. This, I presume, meets your approbation. I had a great deal of conversation with him, and he is a much more sensible man than I had any idea of. I have received this morning a very kind letter from Sir Francis Baring; almost amounting to a promise that I am to be a professor in his new Institution.

I cannot conclude my letter without telling you, that you are a very good lady for what you have done, and that, for it, I give you my hearty benediction. Respectfully and sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I have a project for Campbell's publishing this new volume of poems by subscription; they are already far advanced.

* The late Thomas Campbell, Esq.

27.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

York.

. . . . . .

You can conceive nothing like the tumult of this city; it was as riotous as London in the middle of the night. I have seen two drunken people and one battle. The clergy and ladies are leaving the town. I am most happy to tell you that Lord Milton will, in all probability, get his election. I came here last night, and voted to-day.

I forgot to send you the Chancellor's scrap. My request to him, through my friend Sir William Scott, was, if any patronee of his preferred the North to the South, that I might be allowed to gratify so singular a wish by exchanging with him.

S. S.

28.] *Notes for Lord Holland.*

The Curates Bill gives such power to the Bishops, that, if to that be added the power they already possess by the Bill of Residence, no clergyman who values his domestic comfort will ever think of differing from his bishop's opinions in any publication, religious, political, or historical; thus a great mass of educated men are placed in utter subservience to those who are in utter subservience to the Crown.

The true remedy is, by taking care that proper people are appointed to curacies. *E.g.*, let the bishops, in livings above a certain value, have the power of rejecting any curate who has not taken a degree at some English University. The difficulty of procuring such curates would fix the price. The condition exacted would be the best guarantee that the parish was well taken care of. It is impossible by any law to prevent me from agreeing privately with my curate, when I appoint him, that (let the Bishop order what he will) he shall only accept a certain sum.

The law *endeavours* to prevent this, by saying such bargains shall not be binding; *i.e.*, it aims to effect its object by making one man to act dishonourably towards another, when it is for the interest of the Church that they should both be on the best terms; and this very scoundrel who has thus broken his faith is the species of curate which Mr Perceval contends is to be so honourable. How is his condition bettered by the Bill? If he be dishonourable, will he be a useful man to his parish?

IMPORTANT TOPICS.

That it comes from a school that you do not like should tamper

with the Church of England; that whenever the revenues of the Church are seized upon, it will be under the very same plea upon which this Bill is founded;—*i.e.*, that they belong to the State, and can be appropriated to any person or purpose which the State may think proper; and that the step is short from ecclesiastical to lay tithes.

I forgot to say, that it cannot be contended that this increase of salary is meant to act as a fine upon the non-resident rector; because you first pass a law stating that such and such causes of absence are legal, and then you punish a man for doing what the law permits.

This law supposes that the rector is only desirous of putting in the cheapest curate he can get; whereas non-resident rectors are *commonly* very desirous of putting in people of respectability.

It is folly to speak of bettering the condition of the curate, as if it were a permanent state: it is merely a transitory state. The grub puts up with anything, because it means to be an aurelia. A footman is better than a curate, if to *be* a curate were the only object of any man; but a man says, "I shall succeed to some preferment hereafter. *That* is my reward; but, in the meantime, I shall take what I can get."

Lastly, is it worth while for the Bishop of London to make alterations in the Church when the world has only sixty years to remain,—indeed, now only fifty-nine and a half?

29.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard Street, Feb. 20, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

Your Catholic article of the last Review is, I perceive, printed separately. I am very glad of it: it is excellent, and universally allowed to be so. I envy you your sense, your style, and the good temper with which you attack prejudices that drive me almost to the limits of insanity. The Duke of ——'s agent in Ireland is an Orangeman; and in spite of all the remonstrances of the Duke, who is too indolent or too good-natured to turn him off, he has acted like an Orangeman. What the Duke could not effect, you have done by your review; and the man is now entirely converted to the interests of the Catholics, merely by what you have written upon the subject. This fact Lord Ponsonby told me yesterday.

I have read no article in this number, but Henry Stewart's "Sallust," which is not particularly well done. When I have read

" the Review I will tell you what I think, and what wiser men than I think, of each article.'

Of our friend Horner I do not see much. He has four distinct occupations, each of which may very fairly occupy the life of a man not deficient in activity: the Carnatic Commission, the Chancery Bar, Parliament, and a very numerous and select acquaintance. He has, as you perceive by the papers, spoken often and well, without however having as yet done anything decided.

I regret sincerely that so many years have elapsed since we met. I hope, if you possibly can, you will contrive to come to town this spring: we will keep open house for you; you shall not be molested with large parties. You have earned a very high reputation here, and you may eat it out in turbot, at great people's houses, if you please; though I well know you would prefer the quiet society of your old friends.

Pray tell me whom you see most of, what you do with yourself, what spirits you are in, and every particular about yourself.

I always think of Edinburgh with the greatest pleasure, and always resolve to pay it a visit every Sunday; but want of time and of money have hitherto repressed my noble rage.

SYDNEY SMITH.

30.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

March 13, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have now read the whole of the Review. I like the "Mécanique Céleste;" Davy; Bowles; Hours of Idleness, too severe; Sallust, not good; Spence, profound but obscure; Elizabeth, shocking and detestable; Carnatic, said to be very good.

The Review, I understand, sold in four days. Upon the whole, the number is not a good one; and I will trouble you to write something in every number, or we shall be accused of dulness and insignificance.

SYDNEY SMITH.

31.] TO DR REEVE—(Norwich).

Bishop's Lydiard, Taunton, August 11, 1808.

My dear Sir,

I thank you very kindly for your invitation, and for your recollection of me. I sincerely wish that the little time I can get away from London would admit of my making such a visit: nothing would give me greater pleasure. You mention many inducements:

I can want no other than the pleasure of paying my respects to you and to Mrs Opie.

The Bishop* is incomparable. He should *touch* for bigotry and absurdity! He is a kind of man who would do his duty in all situations at every hazard: in Spain he would have headed his diocese against the French; at Marseilles he would have struggled against the plague; in Flanders he would have been a Fénelon. He does honour to the times in which he lives, and more good to Christianity than all the sermons of his brethren would do, if they were to live a thousand years. As you will probably be his physician when he is a very old man, bolster him up with nourishing meats, my dear doctor, invigorate him with medicated possets. Search for life in drugs and herbs, and keep him as a comely spectacle to the rising priesthood. You have a great charge!

SYDNEY SMITH.

32.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Howick, Sep. 9, 1808.

Dear Lady Holland,

I take the liberty to send you two brace of grouse,—curious, because killed by a Scotch metaphysician; in other and better language, they are mere ideas, shot by other ideas, out of a pure intellectual notion, called a gun.

I found a great number of philosophers in Edinburgh, in a high state of obscurity and metaphysics.

Dugald Stewart is extremely alarmed by the repeated assurances I made that he was the author of "Plymley's Letters,"—or generally considered so to be.

I have been staying here two days on my return, and two days on my journey to Edinburgh. An excellent man, Lord Grey, and pleasant to be seen in the bosom of his family. I approve very highly also of his lady.

Ever most affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

33.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

October 8, 1808.

My dear Lady Holland,

No sooner was your back turned than I took advantage of your absence to give up Harefield, and settle in Yorkshire. I never liked the Harefield scheme. Bad society, no land, no house, no salary, dear as London, neither in London nor out of it, not

* Bishop Bathurst.

accessible to a native, not interesting to a stranger. But the fear of you before my eyes prevented me from saying so.

My lot is now fixed and my heritage fixed,—most probably. But you may choose to make me a bishop, and if you do, I think I shall never do you discredit; for I believe it is out of the power of lawn and velvet, and the crisp hair of dead men fashioned into a wig, to make me a dishonest man; but if you do not, I am perfectly content, and shall be ever grateful to the last hour of my life to you and to Lord Holland.

—— is not returned: the Mufti in high leg about the Spaniards: Horner so extremely serious about the human race, that I am forced to compose my face half a street off before I meet him.

Our next King of Clubs is on Saturday, where you and your expedition will be talked over at some length. I presume you have received a thundering letter from Lord Grey.

You will see in the next Edinburgh Review two articles of mine,—one on the Catholics, the other on the Curates Bill,—neither of which, I think, you will read.

I feel sometimes melancholy at the idea of quitting London,—"the warm precincts of the cheerful day;" but it is the will of God, and I am sure I shall gain by it wealth, knowledge, and happiness.

SYDNEY SMITH.

34.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have heard nothing yet of the doubts and scruples of the Archbishop, and hope they may be dying away.

I have let my house at Thames Ditton very well, and sold the gentleman my wine and poultry. I attribute my success in these matters to having read half a volume of Adam Smith early in the summer, and to hints that have dropped from Horner, in his playful moods, upon the subject of sale and barter.

There is a very snug little dinner to-day at Brompton, of Abercrombie, Whishaw, Bigg, and a few select valuables. It is not known for certain what they will talk about, but conjectured that it will go hard with the Spanish patriots in their conversation. By the by, a person with a feather and a green jacket, clearly a foreigner, rode express up Pall Mall yesterday evening; and a post-chaise and four passed over Westminster Bridge about twelve o'clock to-day. I mention this for our friend Brougham; he must make of it what he can. Slight appearances are to be looked to.

Excuse my nonsense; you are pretty well accustomed to it by this time.

SYDNEY SMITH.

35.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Dear Allen,

I am glad to find that I am mistaken respecting the King of Clubs. Of Lord Holland or you I never had any doubt, nor of Romilly, but of all the others I had; that is, I thought they were of opinion that the benefit of Lords Grenville, Grey, &c., should not be lost to the country for that single question.

I have sent my sermon to Lord Grenville.

It is not that the politics of the day are considered unsuitable to the Edinburgh Review, but the *personalities* of the day are objected to. This seems to have influenced Jeffrey. I thought it right, once for all, to make a profession of my faith: and by that, to exempt myself ever after from the necessity of noticing such attacks as have been made upon me in the Quarterly Review. I meant to do it bluntly and shortly; if I have done it with levity, I am a clumsy and an unlucky fellow.

I by no means give up my opinions respecting the Catholic bishops. I have added something to that note, in order to explain it; but if the electors, warned of the incivism of their candidate, still procure his election, and put him in a situation where he is dependent on the will, and subject to the influence, of a foreign power, the Government has a right, upon every principle of self-preservation, to act with that man as I propose. You may object to the objectors, but nobody else can be entrusted with such a power.

My brethren, who tremble at my boldness, should be more attentive to what I *really* said, which concerns not the truth or falsehood of the passage, but the *expediency* or *inexpediency* of allowing it to be an interpolation.

Brougham has been extremely friendly to me about my sermon.

SYDNEY SMITH.

36.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

October 30, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

I hear with great sorrow from Elmsley, that a very anti-Christian article has crept into the last number of the Edinburgh Review, inaccurate in point of history, and dull in point of execu-

tion. I need no other proof that the Review was left in other hands than yours, because you must be thoroughly aware that the rumour of infidelity decides not only the reputation, but the existence of the Review. I am extremely sorry, too, on my own account; because those who *wish* it to have been written by me, will say it *was* so.

I hear there has been a meeting between you and your patient Southey, and that he was tolerably civil to his chirurgeon.

Do not disappoint us of your company in the spring, in this great city, and bring with you Timotheus, accustomed to midnight carousal and soul-inspiring alcohol. Brown is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, he changeth not: a greater proneness to mutability would, however, have been a much better thing for them both; for I have no doubt but that the laws often have been, and that the Doctor often *is*, hugely mistaken.

Magnitude to you, my dear Jeffrey, must be such an intoxicating idea, that I have no doubt you would rather be gigantic in your errors, than immense in no respect whatsoever; however, comfort yourself that your good qualities are far beyond the common size; for which reason, originally, but *now* from long habit, I am your affectionate friend,

S. SMITH.

37.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard Street, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have as yet read very few articles in the Edinburgh Review, having lent it to a sick countess, who only wished to read it, because a few copies only had arrived in London.

I like very much the review of Davy, think the review of Espriella much too severe, and am extremely vexed by the review of Hoyle's Exodus. The levities it contains will, I am sure, give very great offence; and they are ponderous and vulgar, as well as indiscreet. Such sort of things destroy *all* the good effect which the liberality and knowledge of the Edinburgh Review are calculated to produce, and give to fools as great a power over you as you have over them. Besides the general regret I feel from errors of this nature, I cannot help feeling that they press harder upon *me* than upon anybody; by giving to the Review a character which makes it perilous to a clergyman, in particular, to be concerned in it. I am sure you will excuse me for expressing my feelings upon this subject, and I know that you have friendship enough for me, to be more upon your guard in future against a style of writing which is not only mischievous to me in particular, but mischievous

to the whole undertaking; and without the slightest compensation of present amusement. The author I know; and when he told me the article upon which he had been employed, I foresaw the manner in which he would treat it. Upon this subject Brougham entirely agrees with me.

I am glad you like the Methodists. Of the Scotch market you are a better judge than I am, but you may depend upon it, it will give great satisfaction here; I mean, of course, the *nature* of the attack, not the *manner* in which it is executed. All attacks upon the Methodists are very popular with steady men of very moderate understanding; the description of men among whom the bitterest enemies of the Edinburgh Review are to be found.

I do not understand what you mean by "levity of quotations." I attack these men because they have foolish notions of religion. The more absurd the passage, the more necessary it should be displayed—the more urgent the reason for making the attack at all.

I am thinking of writing a sheet this time about the missions to India and elsewhere; in short, a sort of *exposé* of the present state of Protestant missions. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

38.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

York, Nov. 20, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey.

It is a very long time since I answered your letter, but I have been choked by the cares of the world. I came down here for a couple of days, to look at two places which were to be let, and have been detained here in pursuit of them for ten or twelve days. The place I am aiming at is one mile and a half from York; a convenient house and garden, with twelve acres of land. This will do for me very well while I am building at Foston, where I shall, in all human probability, spend the rest of my days. I am by no means grieved at quitting London; sorry to lose the society of my friends, but wishing for more quiet, more leisure, less expense, and more space for my children. I am extremely pleased with what I have seen of York

About the University of Oxford, I doubt; but you shall have it, if I can possibly find time for it. I am publishing fifty sermons at present, which take up some considerable share of my attention: much more, I fear, than they will of any other person.

I am very glad that the chances of life have brought us two hundred miles nearer together. It is really a fortunate circumstance, that, in quitting London, where I have pushed so many

roots, I should be brought again within the reach of the bed from which I was transplanted.

I return to town next Friday, and leave it for good on Lady-day. Mrs Sydney is delighted with her rustication. She has suffered all the evils of London, and enjoyed none of its goods.

Yours, dear Jeffrey, ever most truly,
SYDNEY SMITH.

39.] TO THE EARL GREY.

December 15, 1808.

Dear Lord Grey,

I had a letter from Allen, and another from Lady Holland, dated Corunna, 1st of December. They talk of going to Lisbon or Cadiz by sea, and I rather think they will do so. Allen complains of the great remissness of the Junta, and it is now the fashion to say here, that there is really no enthusiasm; and that there never have been more, at any time, than seventy thousand Spanish troops on foot.

Many people are now quite certain Buonaparte is an instrument, &c. It turns out, however, that the instrument has been baking biscuit very diligently at Bayonne for three months past, and therefore does not disdain the assistance of human means. We (who probably are not instruments) act as if we were. We send horses that cannot draw, commissaries who cannot feed an army, generals who cannot command one. We take our enemy out of a place where he can do us no harm, and land him safely in the very spot where he can do us the greatest mischief. We are quite convinced that Providence has resolved upon our destruction, because Lord Mulgrave and Lord Castlereagh have neither sense nor activity enough to secure our safety.

I beg my best respects to Lady Grey, and remain, my dear Lord Grey,

Your obliged and obedient servant,
SYDNEY SMITH.

40.] TO THE EARL GREY.

18 *Orchard Street, Portman Square,*
December 21, 1808.

Dear Lord Grey,

Dr Vaughan's brother is just come over, who says the Spaniards are quite sure of succeeding, and that it is impossible to conquer them. I mean to have him examined next week by Whishaw, Brougham, and other Whigs.

Brougham and I are going next week to stay a day or two with

a Mr Richard Brinsley Sheridan, where we are to meet your friend Mrs Wilmot, whom I am very curious to see.

I am just publishing fifty discourses, which I shall take the liberty to send to Lady Grey; conceiving that in so remote a part of England, theology is not to be had so pure as here.

SYDNEY SMITH.

41.]. TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard Street, 1808.

My dear Jeffrey,

When you talk of the clamours of Edinburgh, I will not remind you of a tempest in a pot, for that would be to do injustice to the metropolis of the north; but a hurricane in a horse-pond is a simile useful for conveying my meaning, and not unjust to the venerable city of Edinburgh. ——'s review is imprudent in the expressions—more than wrong in its doctrines; but you will not die of it this time, and are, I believe, more frightened than hurt. As for me, I am very busy, and question much whether I shall be able to contribute; if I do, it will most probably be the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

It is perfectly fair that any other sect of men should set up a Review, and, in my opinion, very immaterial.

In all probability it is all over with Spain, and if so, probably there is an end of Europe; the rest will be a downhill struggle: I cannot help it, and so will be merry to the last. Allen writes word that the Junta has been very remiss, and more, that there is no enthusiasm at all; in addition, it is now said that there never have been more than seventy thousand men in arms.

Yours, my dear Jeffrey, in great haste, and very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

42.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

London, December, 1808.

Why, dear Lady Holland, do you not come home? It has been all over this month. Except in the Holland family there has not been a man of sense for some weeks who has thought otherwise. Are you fond of funerals? Do you love to follow a nation to its grave? What else can you see or do by remaining abroad? Linen-drapers and shoemakers might perhaps save Spain,—in the hands of dukes and bishops it is infallibly gone.

Our friend —— has been bolting out of the course again in the

Edinburgh Review. It is extremely difficult to keep him right. He should always have two tame elephants, Abercrombie and Whishaw, who might beat him with their trunks, when he behaved in an unwhiglike manner.

I have bought a book about drilling beans, and a greyhound puppy for the Malton meeting. It is thought I shall be an eminent rural character. Do not listen to anything that is written to you about a change of administration. There may be a change from one Tory to another, but there is not the slightest chance for the Whigs.

The very worst possible accounts from Ireland. I shall be astonished if they do not begin to make some stir. They will not rebel just now, but they will threaten.

We are expecting every day the destruction of the English army by Buonaparte. You may hear that Lord Melville is in opposition upon the question of Spain, and that he entirely agrees with Lord Grenville upon that point. This is not understood.

I have assisted at a great many dinners during this Christmas, and have been staying with Sheridan at his house in the country.

Kindest regards to Lord Holland and Allen.

SYDNEY SMITH.

43.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 10, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

Many thanks for two fine Gallicia hams; but as for boiling them in *wine*, I am not as yet high enough in the Church for that; so they must do the best they can in water.

You have no idea of the consternation which Brougham's attack upon the titled orders has produced: the Review not only discontinued by many, but returned to the bookseller from the very first volume: the library shelves fumigated, &c.!

The new Review of Ellis and Canning is advertised, and begins next month.

We have admitted a Mr Baring, importer and writer, into the King of Clubs, upon the express condition that he lends £50 to any member of the Club when applied to. I proposed the amendment to his introduction, which was agreed to without a dissenting voice.

You know Mr Luttrell is prisoner in Fez. Mufti has been ill, but the rumour of a Tory detected in a job has restored him. Horner is ill. He was desired to read amusing books: upon searching his library it appeared he had no amusing books,—the

nearest of any work of that description being *The Indian Trader's Complete Guide!*

I cannot tell you how much I miss you and Lord Holland; for besides the pleasure I have in your company, I have contracted a real regard and affection for you, wish you to get on prosperously and wisely,—want other people to like you, and should be afflicted if any real harm happened to you and yours.

SYDNEY SMITH.

44.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Orchard Street, Feb. 20, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

Nothing can be better written than Burns. The Bishop's Spanish America opens badly. We shall talk over this subject much better than we can write upon it.

I by no means say I will not go on with the Edinbgurh Review,—by no means say that I will not contribute more copiously, and articles of better stamp, than I yet have done; but whether I will do so or not, will depend upon the result of our conference. Meet we must, as I shall be either where you are coming to, or where you will pass through; in which of these two places, I do not know. My first object is to sell my house: if I do it before Lady-day, I will quit London at that period. It is very improbable, however, that I shall do so now; and I guess that I shall stay in London till the birthday.

I beg you very seriously to take a little pains with your hand-writing: if you will be resolute about it for a month, you will improve immensely: at present your writing is, literally speaking, illegible, and I have not now read one-half of your letter. You talked of reviewing my sermons, now published: I should be obliged to you to lay aside the idea; I know very well my sermons are quite insignificant.

Spain is quite gone. In all probability the English army will be entirely destroyed; and though the struggle will be long, the greater chance surely is that this country will at length be involved in the general ruin.

SYDNEY SMITH.

45.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Febrnary 21, 1809.

Dear Allen,

I have received from you two or three very kind letters, for

which I thank you; and should have done so before, had I not taken a gay turn lately, and meddled much in the amusements of the town.

I am glad to find that it has pleased Providence to restore you to your reason, and that your are coming home. You may depend upon it, there is no country like this for beauty and steadiness of climate, as well as for *agrémens* of manners; we are a gay people, living under a serene heaven.

I have had thoughts of writing a political pamphlet, but have adjourned it to another year. From time to time I will make a resolute and lively charge upon the enemy.

The Edinburgh Review for February is come. It is the best, I think, that has appeared for a long time; "Burns and Warburton," by Jeffrey; "Code de la Conscription," by Walsh, Secretary to the American Ambassador; "Spanish America," by a Mr Mill;* "Society for the Suppression of Vice," by a Mr Sydney Smith; "West Indies," by Brougham; "Steam Engine," by Playfair; "Sanscrit Grammar," by Hamilton; "Copenhagen," I believe, ditto. The Quarterly Review is out also; not good, I hear.

The division upon the Orders in Council has surprised everybody, and St Stephen told Brougham he thought it decisive of their repeal. Three bishops voted with Lord Grenville. Something of this division may be attributed to Mrs Clarke and the Duke. The conversation of the town for the last fortnight has, as you may suppose, been extremely improper. I have endeavoured as much as I can to give it a little tinge of propriety, but without effect. I think the Duke of York must fall. Believe me, my dear Allen, ever yours most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

46.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

March 7, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

I will review, if you please, "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," and must beg the favour of an early answer to know if it is at my disposal. I may, perhaps, review something else; but at present I know of nothing. Suggest something to me.

Would you like a review of Fénelon by Mr Butler,† of Lincoln's Inn? Has a Mr Blomfield,‡ of Trinity College, Cambridge,

* James Mill, Esq., author of "British India." Mr Mill was intimately acquainted with General Miranda, from whom he doubtless derived much information about Spanish America.—ED.

† Charles Butler, Esq., the celebrated Real Property Lawyer.

‡ The present Bishop of London.

offered you any classical articles? Do you want any? and will you accept any from Dr Maltby?* I think I will review Cockburn's attack upon the Edinburgh Review—why not? What do you think of the Quarterly? I have written twice to John Murray, to beg the favour of him to make some inquiries for me. Will you have the goodness to find out whether my letters have been received, and whether it is inconvenient to him to do what I have asked him to do? Pray answer these queries punctually, and by return, because time presses for the next number.

Mrs S. begs to be kindly remembered. It will, I am sure, give her great pleasure to see you again. I am extremely pleased with your articles, and with the Code of Conscription. Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

47.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

June 24, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

This is the third day since I arrived at the village of Heslington, two hundred miles from London. I missed the hackney-coaches for the first three or four days in York, but after that, prepared myself for the change from the aurelia to the grub state, and dare say I shall become fat, torpid, and motionless with a very good grace.

I have laid down two rules for the country: first, not to smite the partridge; for if I fed the poor, and comforted the sick, and instructed the ignorant, yet I should be nothing worth, if I smote the partridge. If anything ever endangers the Church, it will be the strong propensity to shooting for which the clergy are remarkable. Ten thousand good shots dispersed over the country do more harm to the cause of religion than the arguments of Voltaire and Rousseau. The squire never reads, but is it possible he can believe *that* religion to be genuine whose ministers destroy his game?

I mean to come to town once a year, though of that, I suppose, I shall soon be weary, finding my mind growing weaker and weaker, and my acquaintance gradually falling off. I shall by that time have taken myself again to shy tricks, pull about my watch-chain, and become (as I was before) your abomination.

I am very much obliged to Allen for a long and very sensible letter upon the subject of Spain. After all, surely the fate of Spain depends upon the fate of Austria. Pray tell the said Don Juan, if he comes northward to visit the authors of his existence, he must make this his resting-place.

* The present Bishop of Durham.

" Mrs Sydney is all rural bustle, impatient for the parturition of hens and pigs; I wait patiently, knowing all will come in due season!

SYDNEY SMITH.

48.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope you are quite well, dining with, and giving dinners to, agreeable people: free from all bores, and not displeased with yourself.

I am told Mr Allen is quite miserable at being defeated by the Archbishop. The trial of skill was remarkable, and it is now quite clear that the atoms have no real power and influence in this world.

My life for the summer is thus disposed of:—I walk up and down my garden, and dine at home, till August; then come my large brother and my little sister; then I go to Manchester, to stay with Philosopher Philips, in September; Horner and Murray come to see me in October; then I shall go and see the Earl Grey; then walk up and down my garden till March.

SYDNEY SMITH.

49.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, Sep. 3, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

Are we to see you?—(a difficult thing at all times to do). Have you settled your dispute with Constable, and in what manner? It is almost superfluous to praise what you write, for you write everything in a superior manner; the rule therefore is, that you are to be highly praised, and the blame is the exception. I admire your temper; it is a difficult thing to refute so many follies, and to rebuke so many villanies, and still to keep yourself within bounds; you have the merit of doing this in an eminent degree, and have exemplified your talent in the review of R——. You speak, I cannot help thinking, rather too carelessly of economy in your "Parliamentary Reform;" in the present war, threatening a duration of thirty years, everything will turn upon it. I object rather to your tone than to any of your opinions; nor is it only that economy will decide the contest, but that English habits, and prejudices, and practices are not favourable to this humble political virtue. I must be pardoned for suspecting the praise of —— to be overdone, and for pronouncing the review of Lord —— to be neither short nor

highly entertaining, nor wholly free from that species of political animadversion which is resorted to in the daily papers. The review of Davy I like very much.

The European world is, I think, here at an end; there is surely no card left to play.

Instead of being unamused by trifles, I am, as I well knew I should be, amused by them a great deal too much; I feel an ungovernable interest about my horses or my pigs, or my plants; I am forced, and always was forced, to task myself up into an interest for any higher objects. When, I ask, shall we see you? I claim, by that interrogation, an answer to a letter of special invitation, written to you from Philips's, and which I cordially renew, and would aggravate, if I could, every syllable of invitation it contained. Pray lay an injunction upon Tim Thompson, that he in nowise journey to or from the metropolis without tarrying here.

> Though you are absent, jokes shall never fail;
> I'll kill the fatted calf, and tap the foaming ale;
> We'll settle men and things by rule of thumb,
> And break the lingering night with ancient rum.

SYDNEY SMITH.

50.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

London, Sept. 9, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hear you laugh at me for being happy in the country, and upon this I have a few words to say. In the first place, whether one lives or dies, I hold, and have always held, to be of infinitely less moment than is generally supposed; but if life is to be, then it is common sense to amuse yourself with the best you can find where you happen to be placed. I am not leading precisely the life I should choose, but that which (all things considered, as well as I could consider them) appeared to me to be the most eligible. I am resolved, therefore, to like it, and to reconcile myself to it; which is more manly than to feign myself above it, and to send up complaints by the post, of being thrown away, and being desolate, and such like trash. I am prepared, therefore, either way. If the chances of life ever enable me to emerge, I will show you that I have not been wholly occupied by small and sordid pursuits. If (as the greater probability is) I am come to the end of my career, I give myself quietly up to horticulture, &c. In short, if it be my lot to crawl, I will crawl contentedly; if to fly, I will fly with alacrity; but, as long as I can possibly avoid it, I will never be unhappy. If, with a pleasant wife, three children, a good house and farm, many books, and many friends, who wish me well, I cannot

be happy, I am a very silly, foolish fellow, and what becomes of me is of very little consequence. I have at least this chance of doing well in Yorkshire, that I am heartily tired of London.

I beg pardon for saying so much of myself, but I say it upon this subject once for all.

We had a meeting of *our* Club last Saturday, and a very agreeable one, where your journey to Spain was criticised at much length. Some inclined to this opinion, others to that,—but upon my mentioning that several agreeable dinners at Holland House were irretrievably lost, there was a perfect unanimity of opinion. Sharpe said, "It was a blow."

I met —— in the Strand to-day. He had the two first sheets of his poem in his pocket, and I believe nothing else, for he told me he had spent all his money, and was rather put to it.

Poor Dumont has lost his sister, and is in great affliction; but he dines with me on Saturday, and I hope to raise up the pleasures Nos. 13 and 24.

No news of any kind, except that this pert and silly answer of Canning's to the citizens has made a considerable impression in the City. Some say that Lord Hawksbury attempted this piece of pertness in imitation of Canning.

I have read the Review, and like the review of Rose exceedingly. How can any one dislike it? Parliamentary Reform exceedingly good, with some objections; Miss Edgeworth over-praised; Strabo, by Payne Knight, excellent; the Bakerian Lectures very good; Lord Sheffield dull and hot. I am glad you liked Parr.

I am about to open the subject of classical learning in the Review, from which, by some accident or other, it has hitherto abstained. It will give great offence, and therefore be more fit for this journal, the genius of which seems to consist in stroking the animal the contrary way to that which the hair lies.

I dare say it cost you much to part with Charles; but in the present state of the world, it is better to bring up our young ones to war than to peace. I burn gunpowder every day under the nostrils of my little boy, and talk to him often of fighting, to put him out of conceit with civil sciences, and prepare him for the evil times which are coming!

Ever, respectfully and affectionately, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

51.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, Sept. 20, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

I shall be extremely happy to see ——, and will leave a note for

him at the tavern where the mail stops, to say so. Nothing can exceed the dulness of this place: but he has been accustomed to live alone with his grandmother, which, though a highly moral life, is not an amusing one.

There are two Scotch ladies staying here, with whom he will get acquainted, and to whom he may safely make love the ensuing winter: for love, though a very acute disorder in Andalucia, puts on a very chronic shape in these northern latitudes; for, first, the lover must prove *metapheezically* that he *ought* to succeed; and then, in the fifth or sixth year of courtship (or rather of argument), if the summer is tolerably warm, and oatmeal plenty, the fair one is won.

SYDNEY SMITH.

52.] *From Lord Holland to the Rev. Sydney Smith.*

Dear Sydney,

Pray exert yourself with such friends as your heterodox opinions on Longs and Shorts have left you in Oxford, in favour of Lord Grenville for the Chancellorship. I am sure you would do it *con amore* if you had heard our conversation at Dropmore the other day, and the warm and enthusiastic way in which he spoke of Peter Plymley. I did not fail to remind him that the only author to whom we both thought he could be compared in English, lost a bishopric for his wittiest performance; and I hoped that if we could discover the author, and had ever a bishopric in our gift, we should prove that Whigs were both more grateful and more liberal than Tories. He rallied me upon my affectation of concealing who it was, but added that he hoped Peter would not always live in Yorkshire, where he was persuaded he was at present; for, among other reasons, we felt the want of him just now in the state of the press, and that he heartily wished Abraham would do something to provoke him to take up his pen. But I must write some more letters to Oxford people.—Yours ever,

VASSAL HOLLAND.

53.] TO THE EARL GREY.

October 3, 1809.

Dear Lord Grey,

I have been meditating a visit to Howick Castle, and was meditating it before Lord Castlereagh shot Mr Canning in the thigh, which will make you Secretary of State. If they do not choose to surrender, and attempt to patch up an Administration, then you will remain in the country; and I purpose to stay with you a few days,

if you will accept my company, towards the end of the month. I suspect, however, before that period you will be evacuating Walcheren, contracting for bark and port-wine, selling off the transports, and putting an end to that system of vigour which when displayed by individuals instead of nations, is usually mitigated by a strait waistcoat and low diet.

There is no man who thinks better of what you and your coadjutors can and will do: but I cannot help looking upon it as a most melancholy proof of the miserable state of this country, when men of integrity and ability are employed. If it were possible to have gone on without them, I am sure they would never have been thought of. Yours ever most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

54.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Howick, Nov. 1, 1809.

My dear Lord Holland,

I would have answered your kind note sooner, but that it followed me here, after being detained for a day or two at York.

Whatever little interest or connection I may have shall be exerted in favour of Lord Grenville, to whom I sincerely wish success.

It will be doing a good action, I conjecture, if his lordship ever brings Peter Plymley out of Yorkshire; because, though the said Peter does not by any means dislike living in the country, he would, as I understand, prefer that the country in which he does live were nearer his old friends. I should not be in the least surprised if this grave writer, in some shape or another, made his appearance next spring, if the then state of affairs should enable him to write with effect and utility.

The noble Earl here is in perfect health, and so are all his family. I have been spending a fortnight with him, and think him in appearance quite another person from what he was last year.

I have a project of publishing in the spring a pamphlet, which I think of calling "Common Sense for 1810;" for which I will lay down some good doctrines, and say some things which I have in my head, and which I am sure it will be very useful to say. If I do, I will write it here, and improve it when I obtain further information from you in town. But what *use* is there in all this, or in anything else? Omnes ibimus ad Diabolum, et Buonaparte nos conquerabit, et dabit Hollandiam Domum ad unum corporalium suorum, et ponet ad mortem Joannem Allenium.

Yours ever most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

55.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

November 4, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have just returned from Lord Grey's and have only leisure to reply to the business part of your letter. You may write to Payne Knight without scruple, and using your old illustration of Czar Peter, you may mention money; or rather leave that to me, and I will write to him about it. I hope you will not be affronted if I *seriously* advise you to *dictate* a letter to him. Your motto is, *Mens sine manu.*

Blomfield is an admirable scholar. Publish his review, and Payne Knight will write you something else; but this is just as you please; I have no wish really upon the subject. I will write soon at length. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

56.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

York, Nov. 22, 1809.

Dear Allen,

I am much obliged to you for your book, to which I see but one objection, and that is, that there will be an end of Spain before the Cortes can be summoned, or the slightest of your provisions carried into execution,—admirable rules for diet to a patient in the article of death. I shall read it however, as a Utopia from your romantic brain.

I beg my congratulations to the Lord and Lady of the Castle on the event which your postcript announces to me for the first time. Let the child learn principles from Dumont, Sharpe shall teach him ease and nature, Lauderdale wit, my own Pybus shall inspire his muse, and —— shall show him the way to heaven.

As for the Opposition, if they give up the Catholics, I think their character is ruined. Ireland is much endangered, and the King will kick them out again after he has degraded them. A politician should be as flexible in little things as he is inflexible in great. The probable postponement of such a measure in such times for ten years,—how is it possible for any honest public man to take office at such a price? I have no doubt that the country would rather submit to Massena than to Whitbread. If the King were to give the Opposition *carte blanche* to-morrow, I cannot see that they could form an administration in the House of Commons. I have not promised, as you say, to write a pamphlet called Common Sense, in the spring; it is of very little or no consequence whether

I do write it or not, but I have by no means made up my mind to do it.

We have a report here that the measles and whooping-cough have got amongst the New Administration; it is quite foolish to make such young people ministers.

Yours most truly,
SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I will send you in return for your pamphlet a sermon against horse-racing and coursing, *judiciously* preached before the Archbishop and the sporting clergy of Malton.

57.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

November 29, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have not yet written to Payne Knight, nor do I think any man but yourself has sufficient delicacy and felicity of expression to offer a man of ten thousand a year a few guineas for a literary *jeu d'esprit;* I think, therefore, I must turn it over to you, with many apologies for the delay occasioned by the mis-estimation of my own powers.

I should like to review a little pamphlet upon Public Schools, Pinkey's "Travels in the South of France," and Canning's Letter, if published in a separate pamphlet, as I believe it is.

I have just published a sermon, which I will send you,—very commonplace, like all the others, but honest, and published for a particular reason.

The question in politics is, if the Catholics will be given up? That the whole business will be brought to that issue I do not doubt;—that everything (in spite of Lord Wellesley's acceptance) will be offered to the late Administration, if they will give up the gentlemen of the crucifix.

Nine bishops vote for Lord Grenville at the Oxford election! and the Archbishop of York has written and circulated a high panegyric upon his (Lord G.'s) good dispositions towards the Church; I mean, circulated it in letters to his correspondents.

Ever, my dear Jeffrey, your sincere friend,
SYDNEY SMITH.

58.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, Dec. 8, 1809.

Dear Lady Holland,

I have been long intending to write you a letter of congratulation. There is more happiness in a multitude of children than safety in a multitude of counsellors; and if I were a rich man, I should like to have twenty children.

It seems to me that Canning would come in again under Lord Wellesley, and the whole of this eruption would end with making a stronger Ministry than before.

My wishes for Lord Grenville's success are, I confess, not very fervent: it would be exceedingly agreeable, considered as a victory gained over the Court, but it would connect Lord Grenville personally with high Tories and Churchmen, and operate as a very serious check to the liberal views which he now entertains; and as I consider Lord Grenville as a Magdalene in politics, I always suspect there may be a hankering after his old courses, and wish therefore to keep him as much as possible out of bad company. The Archbishop of these parts not only votes for him, but writes flaming panegyrics upon him, which he has read to me. There are eight other bishops who vote for him. It seems quite unnatural,—like a murrain among the cattle.

I hear you have a good tutor for Henry, which I am exceedingly glad of. Lord Grey has met with no tutor as yet; tutors do not like to go beyond Adrian's Wall. You are aware that it is necessary to fumigate Scotch tutors: they are excellent men, but require this little preliminary caution. They are apt also to break the church windows, and get behind a hedge and fling stones at the clergyman of the parish, and betray other little symptoms of irreligion; but these you must not mind. Send me word if he has any tricks of this kind. I have seen droves of them, and know how to manage them. Very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

59.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, December, 1809.

My dear Jeffrey,

Will you be so good as to send me the names of the original contributors to the Review?

I have scarcely any belief in a change of Administration if they get Canning; if they do not, they are surely as blamable as a man

who, intending to go a journey with great expedition, does not hire a chaise-and-four.

I like Playfair's review, though I comprehend it not; but, as a Dutchman might say, who heard Erskine or you speak at the bar, "I am sure I should be pleased with that man's eloquence, if I could comprehend a word he said." So I give credit to Playfair for the utmost perspicuity and the most profound information, though I understand not what he says, nor am at all able to take any measure of its importance.

God bless you, my dear Jeffrey! Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

60.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Heslington, Dec. 18, 1809.

My dear Allen,

Whoever wants a job done goes to ——: whoever wants sense and information on any subject applies to you.

Do you think Canning's pamphlet a fit subject for the Review? Does it appear to you, as it does to me, a very inefficient and unsatisfactory answer? Don't you think, even from his own account, that he used Castlereagh ill in endeavouring for the first two months to ascertain whether or not he was informed of his (Canning's) objections? Did he not behave very ill to the country in remaining so long a time in office with this (as he thought) bad minister? and in suffering him to retain the management of such an expedition? Do you not think that Lord Wellesley was waiting the result of this intrigue? I shall be very much obliged to you to give me your opinion on these points as soon as you can, that I may (if it shall appear expedient after the receipt of your letter) prepare a proper mixture for my friend.

Yours, dear Allen, most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

61.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Heslington, Dec. 28, 1809.

Dear Allen,

I fear you will think me capricious, but in the interval between my letter and yours, I received a letter from Jeffrey, strongly pressing me to give up the idea of reviewing the pamphlet, as derogatory to the Review; coming after a letter from Abercrombie, in answer to one of mine, strongly to the same purpose. To the union of such authority, and the arguments with which they sup-

ported it, I gave up, and not hearing from you, finally relinquished the idea, which now to resume would appear light and inconsiderate.

I have received four or five letters from some of our friends respecting my sermon; not a word about perseverance in the Catholic question: I see plainly the Protestant religion is gaining ground in the King of Clubs.

I have sent my sermon to John the Silent, and should be obliged to him for the living of St Paul's, Covent Garden, in return. Scire potestates herbarum usumque—I should take for my motto.

I have had a long letter from Brougham upon the subject of my sermon. Do you not think his conduct of the war admirable? I would not for the earth tell you the complimentary simile I have made to him upon it. Ever yours, dear Allen, very faithfully,

SYDNEY SMITH.

62.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date: about 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have no doubt of Lord Morpeth's good disposition towards me, but he is afraid of introducing such a loquacious personage to his decorous parent. This however is very fair; and I hope my children will have the opposite dread, of introducing very silent people to me in my old age.

I like Lord Morpeth,—a man of excellent understanding, very polished manners, and a good heart.

I take it this letter will follow you to Burgos, as I conclude you are packed up for Spain. Dumont, Bentham, and Horner sail in September, with laws, constitution, &c. A list of pains and pleasures, ticketed and numbered, already sent over; with a smaller ditto of emotions and palpitations.

I mean to make some maxims, like Rochefoucauld, and to preserve them. My first is this:—After having lived half their lives respectable, many men get tired of honesty, and many women of propriety.

Yours very affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

63.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Heslington, Jan. 7, 1810.

Dear Murray,

I have not been unmindful of your commission; but no estate of

the atheistical or tithe-free species has occurred since you were here, with the exception of one, the particulars of which are travelling to you *viâ* Horner.

I believe Horner's speech to have been very sensible, and full of good constitutional law; and, upon the whole, without amounting to any very luminous display, to have done him *great* credit. Leach is the man who has distinguished himself the most.

Your grouse are not come by this day's mail, but I suppose they will come to-morrow. Even the rumour of grouse is agreeable; many thanks to you for your kindness. I should certainly have come on to Edinburgh, but it was Christmas; and at that season, you know, there are divers family dinners to be eaten. Ever, my dear Murray, very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

64.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 27, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I always thought Lord Grenville would give up the Catholics, and I think Earl Grey right about the veto. I cannot say how much I like the said Earl;—a fine nature, a just and vigorous understanding, a sensitive disposition, and infirm health. These are his leading traits. His excellencies are courage, discretion, and practical sense; his deficiency, a want of executive coarseness.

Poor ——! pray remind him of my existence, of my good wishes towards him, of our common love of laughter, and our common awkwardness in riding

Many thanks to John Allen for his letter in answer to my first imputation, of the horrid crime of Protestantism having crept into the King of Clubs. He is forced, at last, to reduce himself to Lord Holland, to Romilly, the atrocious soul of Cato, and that complex bundle of ideas which is popularly called *Allen*. As for Romilly, he has no merit in not changing; *les principes* are eternal, and totally independent of events. Benthamism is supposed to have existed before time and space; and goes on by immutable rules, like freezing and thawing. To give up the Catholics, would be to confound the seventeenth pain with the eighteenth.

Farewell, my dear Lady Holland; for I should go on scribbling this nonsense all night, as I should talking it, if I were near you.

SYDNEY SMITH.

65.] *From Mrs Sydney Smith to Francis Jeffrey, Esq.**

Heslington, 1810.

My dear Mr Jeffrey,

I have scarcely a moment in which to tell you,—what, by the by, I ought to have done a week since, and should have done, but that I have been too ill to write a single word that I could avoid,—that Sydney comes home the 17th; and therefore, as soon as you can resolve to come to us, *tant mieux pour nous*. It will make us both sincerely happy to see you, for as long a time as you can contrive to spare us; and I hope you will give us the satisfaction of seeing you quite well.

We have been a sad house of invalids here, but we are all cheering up at the prospect of Sydney's return. The other day, poor little Douglas was lying on the sofa very unwell, while Saba and I were at dinner; and I said, "Well, dear little Chuffy, I don't know what is the matter with us both, but we seem very good-for-nothing!" "Why, mamma," said Saba, "*I'll* tell you what the matter is: you are so melancholy and so dull because papa is away; he is so merry, that he makes us all gay. A family doesn't prosper, I see, without a papa!" I am much inclined to be of her opinion: and suspecting that the observation would please him quite as well as that of any of his London flatterers, I despatched it to him the next day.

Yours very sincerely,

CATHARINE AMELIA SMITH.

66.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, April 21, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I found all here quite well, after some illness and much despondency; of which, if my absence were not the cause, my return has been the cure.

Letters awaited me here from his Smallness Mr Jeffrey, stating his extreme lack of matter for the ensuing number of the Edinburgh Review. The time allotted is so short, that I shall have no opportunity of introducing any of those admirable and serious papers of which your ladyship has so unjust an abhorrence, but in which my *forte* really consists.

* This letter is so complete and faithful a family picture, that I have not been able to resist the temptation to insert it. The joyous and joy-giving father, the tender and devoted wife and mother, the happy children, sensible of their happiness, are all placed before us in these few words.—ED.

I hope you like Holland House after dirty Pall Mall. You will only have a few real friends till about the 15th of May. As soon as the lilac begins to blossom, and the streets to get hot, even Fish Crawford will come. I am sure it is better for Lord Holland and you to be at Holland House, because you both hate exercise (as every person of sense does), and you must be put in situations where it can be easily and pleasantly taken. Even Allen gets some exercise at Holland House, for Horner, Sheridan, and Lord Lauderdale take him out on the gravel-walk, to milk him for bullion, Spain, America, and India; whereas, in London, he is milked in that stall below-stairs.

I hope your dinner at Rogers's was pleasant, and that it makes not a solitary exception to the nature and quality of his entertainments.

I will say nothing of poor Mr Windham. Lord Holland and you must miss him, in every sense of the word, deeply.

I am sorry the Opposition have taken such a strong part in favour of the privileges of the House, for I am sure it is the wrong side of the question; and the democrats have chosen admirable ground to fight the other political parties upon, and will, in the end, defeat them.

There is nothing, I think, good in the Edinburgh Review this time, but Allen's two papers on Spanish America.

SYDNEY SMITH.

67.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

June, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I am truly glad that Tierney is better from those nitrous baths. Can so much nitrous acid get into the human frame without producing some moral and intellectual effect as well as physical? If you watch, I think you will find changes. You have done an excellent deed in securing a seat for poor Mackintosh, in whose praise I most cordially concur. He is very great, and a very delightful man, and, with a few bad qualities added to his character, would have acted a most conspicuous part in life. Yet, after all, he is rather academic than forensic. A professorship at Hertford is well imagined, and if he can keep clear of contusions at the annual peltings, all will be well. The season for lapidating the professors is now at hand; keep him quiet at Holland House till all is over.*

If I could envy any man for successful ill-nature, I should envy Lord Byron for his skill in satirical nomenclature.

* This refers to some outbreaks of insubordination among the students at Haileybury College.—ED.

Nothing can exceed the evils of this spring. All agricultural operations are at least a month behindhand. The earth, that ought to be as hard as a biscuit, is as soft as dough. We live here in great seclusion ;—happily and comfortably. My life is cut up into little patches. I am schoolmaster, farmer, doctor, parson, justice, &c., &c.

I hope you have read, or are reading, Mr Stewart's book, and are far gone in the philosophy of mind ; a science, as he repeatedly tells us, still in its infancy : I propose, myself, to wait till it comes to years of discretion. I hear Lord Holland has taken a load of fishing-tackle with him. *This* is a science which appears to me to be still in its infancy.

Do not let Allen stay too long at home ; it will give him a turn for the domestic virtues, and spoil him.

We are all well, and unite, my dear Lady Holland, in the kindest regards to you and the noble fisherman.

SYDNEY SMITH.

68.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, July, 1810.

My dear Jeffrey,

Respecting my sermons, I most sincerely beg of you to extenuate nothing. Treat me *exactly* as I deserve. Remember only what it is you are reviewing,—an oration confined by custom to twenty or thirty minutes, before a congregation of all ranks and ages. Do not be afraid of abusing me, if you think abuse necessary : you will find I can bear it extremely well from you.

As for the Quarterly Review, I have not read it, nor shall I, nor *ought* I—where abuse is intended, not for my correction, but my pain. I am however very fair game : if the oxen catch the butcher, they have a right to toss and gore him.

I can only trifle in this Review. It takes me some time to think about serious subjects, not having my head full of arguments on all subjects, like a certain friend of mine,—to whom all happiness!

SYDNEY SMITH.

I get my hay in on Monday.

69.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, Nov. 3, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope you are returned quite well, and much amused, from your Portsmouth excursion; for I presume you *are* returned, as I see Lord Holland has been speaking in the House of Lords.

We had a brisk run on the road,—Horner, Murray, Jeffrey, Mrs ——, my brother Cecil. We liked Mrs ——. It was wrong, at her time of life, to be circumvented by ——'s diagrams; but there is some excuse in the novelty of the attack, as I believe she is the first lady that ever fell a victim to algebra, or that was geometrically led from the paths of discretion.

I had occasion to write to Brougham on some indifferent subject, and stated to him (as I knew it would give him pleasure) the bullion glory of Horner; every ounce of him being now worth, at the Mint price, £3, 17s. 4d.! Brougham expresses himself in raptures.

SYDNEY SMITH.

70.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

November 29, 1810.

Dear Lady Grey,

Thank you very kindly for your obliging invitation to me and Mrs Smith. Nothing would give Mrs Sydney more pleasure than to make your acquaintance, and I am sure you would not find her unworthy of it; but the care of her young family, and the certain conviction, if she leaves them for a day, that they are all dead, necessarily confines her a good deal at home. Some lucky chance may however enable her hereafter to pay her respects to you; and she will, I am sure, avail herself of it with great pleasure.

If you and Lord Grey (little tempted by raree-shows) can be tempted to see York Minster, you must allow us to do the honours. We are on the road. We are about equal to a second-rate inn, as Mrs Sydney says; but I think, myself, we are equal to any inn on the North Road, except Ferry Bridge.

The Archbishop of York not only votes for Lord Grenville, but has passed upon him and his ecclesiastical propensities a warm panegyric, which he has read to me, has sent to Oxford, and dispersed everywhere. There are eight bishops who vote for him. I call them the Sacred Nine!

My discourse will be finished to-morrow, and shall be forthwith

sent. I am obliged to you for your opinion of my orthodoxy, which I assure you is no more than I deserve. As for being a bishop, that I shall never be; but I shall, I believe, be quite as happy a man as any bishop.

I remain, dear Lady Grey, very sincerely and respectfully yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I am performing miracles in my parish with garlic for hooping-cough.

71.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

December 5, 1810.

My dear Lady Holland.

I have understood that Sir James Mackintosh is about to return, of which I am very glad. I shall like him less than I did, when I thought *Philowsophee* to be of much greater consequence than I now do; but I shall still like him very much.

Bobus is upon the eve of his return, and I rather think we shall see him in the spring.

Lord Holland is quite right to get a stock of eatable sheep; but such sheep are not exclusively the product of Scotland, but of every half-starved, ill-cultivated country; and are only emphatically called Scotch, to signify ill fed; as one says Roman, to signify brave. They may be bought in Wales, in any quantity; and every November, at Helmsley, in Yorkshire: the mutton you ate at my house was from thence. Helmsley is two hundred and twenty miles from London.

I am, my dear Lady Holland, yours sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

72.] TO THE EARL GREY.

December 29, 1810.

My dear Lord,

I am very much obliged to you for your kindness in sending me the pheasants. One of my numerous infirmities is a love of eating pheasants.

I am always sorry for any evil that happens to Lady Grey, be it only a sick finger; no light malady, when it prevents those who respect her as much as I do from receiving a letter from her. I shall have great pleasure in criticising the flower-garden next year, but still have a hankering for a little bit of green in the middle.

I wish I could write as well as Plymley; but if I could, where is such a case to be found? When had any lawyer such a brief? The present may be a good brief, but how can it be *so* good?

To write such letters as you require, it would be necessary (supposing, as you politely suppose, that I could do the thing well under any circumstances) that I should be near you, and in London: materials furnished at such a distance from you and the press, would never do; especially in a production that must be hasty, if it is at all. You may depend upon it, I will be as good as my word, and write one or two pamphlets. I shall never own them, and you will probably read them without knowing them to be mine; but it will be contributing my mite to a good cause. It is foolish to boast that I intend to subscribe a mite; it is better to do it, and be silent; but I spake it between the hours of six and eight, and to the leader of the Whigs.

I dare say you are right about ——'s declaration; and as I never find you averse to reason a matter with a person so politically ignorant as myself, were I in Howick library, I dare say I should soon yield to your explanations. It appears to me that the little Methodist says, "There is a vacancy in the Government; I will proceed to fill it up, in a manner which appears to me (and has before appeared to Mr Pitt) the most eligible. In the meantime, as there is no executive government, the public service must not suffer. *We* (not *I*) will perform every function of the Executive, and then come for a bill of indemnity."

Now, if his plan for a Regency is right, how is his declaration blamable? Somebody *must* act till the vacancy is filled up; and if not the Ministers, who besides? But they have not filled up this vacancy in the most expeditious manner. True,—they are blamable; not for acting executively in the interval, but for not making that interval as short as possible.

Excuse my heresies: you know that a short argument often teaches me.

Ever, my dear Lord, yours most sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

73.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, 1810.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have just had a letter from Horner, who is inclined to think Perceval will make a struggle against the Prince. I wish he may, and so thoroughly disgust the said Prince, that no future meanness will be accepted as an atonement. The best news that Horner

sends is, that the Prince has behaved extremely well. It is nonsense however to look about in England for political information. The most delicate and sensitive turpitude is always to be met with in Scotland: there are twenty people in Edinburgh whose manners and conduct are more perfect exponents of the King's health than the signatures of his physicians.

I am obliged to you for the kind things you say to me about myself. There is nobody, my dear Jeffrey, whose good opinion I am more desirous of retaining, or whose sagacity and probity I more respect. Living a good deal alone (as I now do) will, I believe, correct me of my faults; for a man can do without his own approbation in much society, but he must make great exertions to gain it when he lives alone. Without it, I am convinced, solitude is not to be endured.

I have read, since I saw you, Burke's works, some books of Homer, Suetonius, a great deal of agricultural reading, Godwin's "Enquirer," and a great deal of Adam Smith. As I have scarcely looked at a book for five years, I am rather hungry.

God bless you, dear Jeffrey! Ever your sincere friend,

S. S.

74.] TO THE EARL GREY.

January 2, 1811.

Dear Lord Grey,

I congratulate you very sincerely upon the safety of Lady Grey; and I beg you will convey, also, my kind congratulations to her. I think now you will not be ashamed to speak with your enemies in the gate.

I have just been reading Allen's account of your Administration. Very well done, for the cautious and decorous style: but it is quite shameful that a good stout answer has not been written to your calumniators. The good points of that Administration were the Slave Trade, Newport's Corn Bill, Romilly's Bankrupt Bill, the attempt at Peace, and the efforts made for the Catholics. The disadvantages under which the Administration laboured were, the ruin of Europe—the distress of England—and the hatred of King and people. The faults they committed were, not coming to a thorough understanding with the King about the Catholics—making a treasurer an auditor, and a judge a politician—protecting the King's money from decimation—and increasing the number of foreign troops.

Balancing the good and the evil, I am sure there has been no

such honest and enlightened Administration since the time of Lord Chatham. God send it a speedy return!

Ever yours, my dear Lord, with most sincere respect and regard,

SYDNEY SMITH.

75.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Heslington, York, Jan. 13, 1811.

Dear Lady Grey,

This comes to say that you must not be out of spirits on account of Lord Grey's going to town; but rather thank Providence that you did not marry one of those stupid noblemen who are never sent for to town on any occasion. Mrs —— never loses Mr ——; Mr —— lives with Mrs ——; and why? Who wants their assistance? What good could they do in any human calamity? Who would send for them, even to consult about losing a tooth? So that the temporary loss of Lord Grey is *his* glory and *yours*, and the *common good*. And you are bound to remain quietly in your Red Bell* till you become strong enough for travelling. If you are haunted by scruples too difficult for Mr —— (alas! how easily may anything be too difficult for Mr ——!), then pray send for me.

As I know what a pleasure it is to you to hear or read any good praise of Lord Grey, I send you an extract from Mr Horner's letter to me this day. "Lord Grey's absence, though scarcely excusable, has done no harm. He is decidedly at the head of the great aristocracy, including not only Whigs, but a great many Tories. I wish he were . . . he wants only that, to give him the power of doing more good, and commanding greater influence, than any man has done since the time of Fox. He deserves all the praises bestowed upon him. A more upright, elevated, gallant mind there cannot be; but . . . and will not condescend to humour them, and pardon them for their natural infirmities; nor is aware that *both people and Prince must be treated like children.*"

You may fill up the blanks as you like; but if you valued Mr Horner's understanding and integrity one half as much as I do, you would, I am sure, value this praise.

A pheasant a day is very fattening diet: such has been my mode of living for these last few days. I was poetical enough, though, to think I had seen them out of my window, at Howick, whilst I was dressing, and to fancy that I liked eating them the less on that account.

* A room of Lady Grey's, so called by Mr. Sydney Smith, exactly the size of the large bell at Moscow.

Health and happiness, and every good wish, dear Lady Grey, to you and yours!

SYDNEY SMITH.

76.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Heslington, York, Jan. 24, 1811.

Dear Lady Grey,

Thank you for your obliging and friendly letter. I believe every word you say as implicitly as I should if you had never stirred from Howick all your life. And this is much to say of any one who has lived as much in the high and gay world as you have done. I shall be glad to hear that you are safely landed in Portman Square, with all your young ones; but do not set off too soon, or you will be laid up at the Black Swan, Northallerton, or the Elephant and Castle, Borough Bridge, and your bill will come to a thousand pounds, besides the waiter, who will most probably apply for a place under Government.

We are all perfectly well, and panting to show you in the summer, ourselves and York Cathedral. I had occasion to write to ——, and gave her a lecture upon humility, and against receiving me with pride and grandeur when I come to town; I give *you* no such lecture, for I should accost you with as much confidence if you were Queen of Persia, because I am quite sure you are power-proof. But you will not be put to the test, for the King will recover. The late majorities against the Prince are, I think, quite decisive that the King's health is improving; but this you know better than I do.

Never was such a ferment as Pall Mall and Holland house are in! John Allen, wild and staring,—Antonio, and Thomas, the porter, worked off their legs,—Lord Lauderdale sleeping with his clothes on, and a pen full of ink close to his bedside, with a string tied on the wrist of his secretary in the next room! Expresses arriving at Pall Mall every ten minutes from the House of Commons, and the Whig nobility and commonalty dropping in at all hours to dinner or supper! Is not your Bell better than this? Nevertheless, get well, and quit it. There is great happiness in the country, but it requires a visit to London every year to reassure yourself of this truth.

SYDNEY SMITH.

77.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 24, 1811.

Dear Lady Holland,

You will read (perhaps not)—but there will be of mine—in the Edinburgh Review a short account of the Walcheren Expedition, observations upon Lord Sidmouth's project against Dissenters, and Walton's Spanish Colonies.

If there be a Regency, I guess the following Administration :—Lord Grey, First Lord of the Treasury; Lord Grenville, Foreign Office; Lord Holland, Home Department; Erskine, Chancellor; Lord Moira, Commander-in-chief; Lord Spencer, Admiralty; Romilly and Leach, Attorney and Solicitor; Pigott, Exchequer or Common Pleas; Tierney, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Lansdowne, Ireland; Whitbread, Secretary-at-War and Colonies; Abercromby, Secretary of State; Lord Morpeth, Board of Control; Lord Robert Spencer, National Woodsman. The President of the Council and the Privy Seal I cannot guess, unless Lord Stafford should be the former; and it would be much better if Lord Holland were Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Grenville for the Home Department.

The drawing-room in Pall Mall must have been an entertaining scene for some weeks past: the crowds below waiting upon Allen for facts, and acquaintances of 1806 calling above. Lord Lauderdale has, I hear, not had his clothes off for six weeks. Pray remember me very kindly to him; I cannot say how much I like him.

I hope to see your Ladyship early in April, by which time the tumult will be hushed, and you will be either in full power, or in perfect weakness.

SYDNEY SMITH.

TO LADY HOLLAND.

February, 1811.

My dear Lady Holland,

I was terribly afraid at first that the Prince had gone over to the other party; but the King's improved condition leaves a hope to me that his conduct has been dictated by prudence, and the best idea he can form of filial piety from books and chaplains; for that any man in those high regions of life, cares for his father, is what I cannot easily believe. That he will gain great popularity from his conduct, I have no doubt :—perhaps he may deserve it, but I see through a Yorkshire glass, darkly.

I am exceedingly glad Lord Holland has taken up the business

of libels; the punishment of late appears to me most atrocious. If libels against the public are *very* bad, they become sedition or treason; new crimes may be punished as such; but as long as they are *only* libels, such punishments as have been lately inflicted are preposterous; and seem to proceed from that hatred which feeble and decorous persons always feel against those who disturb the repose of their minds, call their opinions in question, and compel them to think and reason. There should be a maximum of imprisonment for libel. No man should be imprisoned for more than a year for any information filed by the Attorney-General. Libels are not so mischievous in a free country, as Mr Justice Grose, in his very bad lectures, would make them out to be. Who would have mutinied for Cobbett's libel? or who would have risen up against the German soldiers? And how easily might he have been answered! He deserved some punishment; but to shut a man up in gaol for two years for such an offence is most atrocious. Pray make Lord Holland speak well and eloquently on this subject.

SYDNEY SMITH.

79.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, Feb. 19, 1811.

My dear Jeffrey,

It is long since I have written to you,—at least, I hope you think so. Where is the Review? We are come to the birth, and have not strength to bring forth. It is very possible that I have not done justice to your article upon the Catholics, but the subject is so worn out that I read it hastily; and though I like almost everything you like, I was not violently arrested by any passage. Their exclusion from office is, I perceive by the papers, rather strongly put in the last Catholic debate, by enumerating, not the classes of offices from which they are shut out, but the total number of individual offices —thirty-five or forty thousand. This is a striking and popular way of putting the fact.

Do you believe that the Prince made this last change with the consent of the Whigs? I much doubt it; but if not, his information seems to have been better than theirs; for, with such an immediate prospect of the King's recovery, a change in the Administration would have been quite ridiculous. I hope you will make some stay with us on your way to town, that Mrs Sydney may see something of you. I know you are fond of riding, and I can offer you the use of a dun pony, which Murray knows to be a very safe and eligible conveyance. This revival of his Majesty has revived

my slumbering architecture, and I think I shall begin building this year; yet I get heartily frightened when I think of it. Kirkpatrick's "Embassy to Nepaul" is not yet published: so I cannot tell how much it will take up. Tell me some subjects for the next number; I have none in contemplation but an article in favour of the Protestant Dissenters; and this is premature, as I think their case should be kept in the background till that of the Catholics is disposed of.

And yet what folly to talk in this manner! Are we not, like Brook Watson's leg, in the jaws of the shark? Can any sensible man,—any human being but a little trumpery parson,—believe that we shall not be swallowed up? It is folly not to gather up a little, while it is yet possible, and to go to America. We are all very well, engaged in the mystery of gardening, and other species of rural idleness, for which my taste grows stronger and stronger.

Ever, dear Jeffrey, affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

80.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

81 *Jermyn Street, May* 23, 1811.

How very odd, dear Lady Holland, to ask me to dine with you on Sunday, the 9th, when I am coming to stay with you from the 5th to the 12th! It is like giving a gentleman an assignation for Wednesday, when you are going to marry him on the preceding Sunday,—an attempt to combine the stimulus of gallantry with the security of connubial relations. I do not propose to be guilty of the slightest infidelity to you while I am at Holland House, except you dine in town; and then it will not be infidelity, but spirited recrimination.

Ever the sincere and affectionate friend of Lady Holland,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I believe no two Dissenting ministers will rejoice at Lord Sidmouth's defeat more than Lord Holland and myself.

81.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, June 22, 1811.

My dear Jeffrey,

Having quitted Capua, I must now to business.

I have received the Review, and am extremely pleased with the article upon the Liberty of the Press, and with the promise of its

continuation. The review of Jacob's Travels I do not like; it is full of old grudges.

You over-praise all Scotch books and writers. Alison's is a pretty book, stringing a number of quotations upon a false theory, nearly true, and spun out to an unwarrantable size, merely for the sake of introducing the illustrations. I have not read your review, for I hate the subject; and you may conceive how much I hate it, when even your writing cannot reconcile me to it.

I am now hardening my heart, and correcting my idleness, as quickly as possible; I mean to be most penitently diligent.

I saw John Playfair in town—grow thinner and older by some years. Mrs Apreece and the Miss Berrys say, that, on the whole, he is the only man who can be called irresistible.

SYDNEY SMITH.

82.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Heslington, July 17, 1811.

My dear Lady Holland,

We have had Dugald Stewart and his family here for three or four days. We spoke much of the weather and other harmless subjects. He become however once a little elevated; and, in the gaiety of his soul, let out some opinions which will doubtless make him writhe with remorse. He went so far as to say he considered the King's recovery as very problematical.

The Archbishop says that Lord Ellenborough said to him, "Take care of Lord Holland, and I will take care of Romilly. The one wants to attack the Church, the other the Law." I assured his Grace it was a calumny.

SYDNEY SMITH.

83.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Heslington, Dec. 6, 1811.

My dear Murray,

I cannot say how much mortified I am not to have reached Edinburgh; nothing should have prevented me but fraternity, and to that I was forced to yield.*

I went to Lord Grey's with young Vernon, the Archbishop's son, a very clever young man;—genus, Whig; species, Whigista Mitior; of which species I consider Lord Lansdowne to be at the head, as the Lords Holland and Grey are of the Whigista Truculentus Anactophonus. I heard no news at Howick. Lord Grey sincerely

* Mr Cecil Smith had lately returned from India.

expects a change. I taxed him with saying so from policy, but he assured me it was his real opinion; perhaps it was.

I am reading Locke in my old age, never having read him thoroughly in my youth:—a fine, satisfactory sort of fellow, but very long-winded.

You do not know, perhaps, that among my thousand and one projects is to be numbered a new metaphysical language,—a bold fancy for any man not born in Scotland. Physics, metaphysics, gardening, and jobbing are the privileges of the North. By the by, have you ever remarked that singular verse in the Psalms, "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, neither from the south?"

I rather quarrel with you for not sending me some Edinburgh politics. I have a very sincere attachment to Scotland, and am very much interested by Scotch news. Five of the most agreeable years of my life were spent there. I have formed many friendships which I am sure will last as long as I live.

Adieu, dear Murray! Pray write to me.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

84.] TO MRS APREECE.*

Heslington, Dec. 29, 1811.

My dear Mrs Apreece,

I am very much flattered by your recollection of me, and by your obliging letter. I have been following the plough. My talk has been of oxen, and I have gloried in the goad.

Your letter operated as a charm. I remembered that there were better things than these;—that there was a metropolis; that there were wits, chemists, poets, splendid feasts, and captivating women. Why remind a Yorkshire resident clergyman of these things, and put him to recollect human beings at Rome, when he is fattening beasts at Ephesus?

The Edinburgh Review is just come out,—long and dull, as usual; to these bad results and effects I have contributed, in a review of Wyvill's "Papers on Toleration."

I shall be in London in March. Pray remain single, and marry nobody (let him be whom he may); you will be annihilated the moment you do, and, instead of an alkali or an acid, become a neutral salt. You may very likely be happier yourself, but you will be lost to your male friends.

* Afterwards Lady Davy.

My brother is a capital personage; full of sense, genius, dignity, virtue, and wit.

God bless you, dear Mrs Apreece! Kind love from all here!

S. S.

P.S.—That rogue Jeffrey will have the whip-hand of me for a month; but I will annihilate him when I come up, if he gives himself airs, and affects to patronise me. Mind and cultivate Whishaw, and Dumont, and Tennant.

85.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

January, 1812.

Dear Jeffrey,

I certainly am very intolerant and impatient, and I will endeavour to be less so, but do not be hurt by my critiques on your criticisms; you know (if you know anything) the love and respect I have for you; this is not enough—add also, the very *high admiration*. But it is the great fault of our Review that our wisdom is too long; it did well at first, because it was new to find so much understanding in a journal. But every man takes up a Review with a lazy spirit, and wishes to get wise at a cheap rate, and to cross the country by a shorter path. Health and respect!

SYDNEY SMITH.

86.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

June, 1812.

My dear Jeffrey,

I feel that I owe you an apology for troubling you so often about the Review; but I am really desirous of doing something for it, and, in my search for new books, they turn up at different times, and compel me to make these different appeals to you. The subjects I have already mentioned are:—1st, Sir F. Burdett on the Law of Imprisonment for Libel; 2d, The Statement of the late Negotiations; 3d, The Duke of Sussex's speech; 4th (and now for the first time), Halliday's "Observations on the Present State of the Portuguese Army;" in which I propose to include some short statement of, and observations upon, Lord Wellington's campaigns in Portugal. The last undertaking is the only one to which a fresh answer is required from you.

Horner is, I think, getting better. There never was a period when the hopes of good Whigs were so cruelly disappointed. I dare say Lords Grey and Grenville meant extremely well, but they

have bungled the matter so as to put themselves in the wrong, both with the public and with their own troops. The bad faith of the Court is nothing. If they had suspected that bad faith, they should have put it to the proof, and made it clear to all the world that the Court did not mean them well; at present they have made the Court the object of public love and compassion, made Lord Yarmouth appear like a virtuous man, given character to the Prince, and restored the dilapidation of kingly power.

I write from Cambridge, and shall be at York on Friday to dinner. Adieu! and believe me ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

87.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Heslington, August 17, 1812.

Dear Lord Grey,

I really think you are unjust to ——. He may be capricious, unjust, fickle, a thousand faults; but, if you mean by discreditable motives, any love of office or concern about it, I sincerely think him exempted from any feelings of that nature.

I suppose you know by this time the nature of Canning's last negotiation; if not, he was to have come in with two members in a Cabinet of fifteen; and Lord Liverpool, who negotiated the arrangement, conceived it to be agreed between Lord Castlereagh and Canning that they were to enjoy co-ordinate power and importance in the Commons,—at least, as much as any ministerial arrangement could confer equal power upon such unequal men. In a subsequent explanation, however, it turned out that Lord Castlereagh had no such intentions; that he intended to keep the lead in the House of Commons, and to be considered as the Minister of the Crown in that assembly. This put an end to the negotiation.

I do not know whether you like praise, but I cannot help saying how much I was struck with your style of writing in the State Papers published by Lord Moira. It is impossible that anything can be more clear, manly, and dignified; it is a *perfect model* for State-paper writing. After saying thus much of the *mode*, it is right to add, I am the critic in the Edinburgh Review upon the *substance* of the negotiation. I have given reasons for my opinion, preserving, as I hope and intended and felt, the greatest possible respect for you; but I am foolish in supposing that you heed or read the obscure speculations of reviewers and scribblers.

I remain ever, my dear Lord Grey, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

88.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

September, 1812.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have to thank you for many kind letters, which I would have answered sooner, but that I have been expecting the Review, upon which I wished to offer you my opinion.

I like the review of Malcolm very much; there is such an appearance of profound knowledge of the subject, joined to so very gentlemanlike a spirit of forbearance, that it gives me considerable pleasure. I liked very much the article on Peace, and the review on Miss Edgeworth; John Knox I have not yet read. I am very glad you like my review of the Negotiation; pray tell me if it is much complained of by the Whigs. I shall not regret having written it if it is; but if I reconcile the interests of *truth* with the feelings of party, so much the better; I am sure it is the good sense and justice of the question.

Whilst I write, our poor, amiable old friend is mouldering in her tomb; I had a most sincere affection for her, and such a friend I shall not soon replace, and I feel the loss with very sincere grief. Miss —— is deeply affected: she is made up of fine feelings, and her mother filled her whole heart and soul.

I know not how to rejoice in the useless splendour of Lord Wellington's achievements, for I am quite a disbeliever in his ultimate success; but I am incapable of thinking of anything but building, and my whole soul is filled up by lath and plaster.

Mrs Fletcher has been here and dined with us,—self and spouse. I was surprised to find her unaffected, and more sensible than from her blazing sort of reputation I had supposed to be the case; more handsome, too, than I had judged her in Edinburgh: in short, she produced a very agreeable impression both upon Mrs Sydney and me.

I see Seymour is selling his Scotch place. I am glad to find you are in the country, for then I am sure you are happy.

Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

89.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

December 29, 1812.

My dear Allen,

I thank you sincerely for your friendly and considerate communication respecting the opinion of the Archbishop.

You may easily imagine that I have reflected a good deal upon

the expediency of an undertaking so very serious as that of building. I may very likely have determined wrong, but I have determined to the best of my judgment, anxiously and actively exerted. I have no public or private chance of changing my situation for the better; such good fortune may occur, but I have no right to presume upon it. I have waited and tried for six years, and I am bound in common prudence to suppose that my lot is fixed in this land. That being so, what am I to do? I have no certainty of my present house; the distance is a great and serious inconvenience; if I am turned out of it, it will be scarcely possible, in so thinly-inhabited a country, to find another. I am totally neglecting my parish. I ought to build; if I were bishop, I would compel a man in my situation to build; and should think that any incumbent acted an ungentlemanlike part who compelled me to compel him, and who did not take up the money which is lent by the Governors of Queen Anne's bounty for the purpose of building.

Such, I conceived, would be the Archbishop's opinion of me had I availed myself of his good-nature to apply for perpetual absence from my living, and for permission to live in hired houses. In all conversations I have had with him, he has never discouraged the idea of building, but, on the contrary, always appeared to approve and promote it. I am therefore surprised not a little at what you tell me, and can only interpret it to mean that he would not absolutely have compelled me to build, but that he would have thought it mean and unfair in me not to have made an exertion of that kind. His mere forbearance from the use of authority is an additional reason for beginning. Lastly, I have gone so far that even if the communication were more authorised and direct, I could hardly recede. To kick down the money I have been saving for my family has cost me a great deal of uneasiness, and at one time I had thought of resigning my living. Having now decided according to the best means of an understanding extremely prone to error, nothing remains but to fight through my difficulties as well as I can.

It will give me sincere pleasure to think that you take an interest in my well-doing (not that I doubted it), but a particular instance (like this) is more cheering than a general belief.

Health, happiness, and as many new years as you wish!

SYDNEY SMITH.

90.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

January 1, 1813.

My dear Allen,

. . . . . .

As to politics, everything is fast setting in for arbitrary power. The Court will grow bolder and bolder; a struggle will commence, and if it ends as I wish, there will be Whigs again, or if not, a Whig will be an animal described in books of natural history, and Lord Grey's bones will be put together and shown, by the side of the monument, at the Liverpool Museum. But when these things come to pass, you will no longer be a Warden, but a brown and impalpable powder in the tombs of Dulwich. In the meantime, enough of liberty will remain to make our old age tolerably comfortable; and to your last gasp you will remain in the perennial and pleasing delusion that the Whigs are coming in, and will expire mistaking the officiating clergyman for a King's messenger.

But whatever your feelings be on this matter, mine for you will be always those of the most sincere respect and regard. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

91.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 17, 1813.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have innumerable thanks to return to you for the kind solicitude you have displayed respecting my rural architecture. I have explained myself so fully to Allen upon the convenience and necessity of this measure, that I will not bore you any more with the subject; but I must add a word upon the Archbishop's conversation with Abercromby. Is it not a little singular, that his Grace, in all the various conversations I have had with him on this subject,—on the promise I made to him to build,—on the complaints I have frequently made to him of the great hardships and expense of building, when I laid before him my plans,—that he should never have given me the most distant hint, directly or indirectly, that such a process could be in honour dispensed with? Is it not singular that he should have reserved this friendly charge of supererogation, till I had burnt my bricks, bought my timber, and got into a situation in which it was more prudent to advance than to recede? The archbishop is a friendly, good man; but such is not the manner of laymen. It would be a bad comfort to an Indian widow, who was half-burnt, if the head Brahmin were to call out to

her, "Remember, it is *your own act and deed;* I never ordered you to burn yourself."

We have had meetings here of the clergy, upon the subject of the Catholic question, but none in my district; if there be, I shall certainly give my solitary voice in favour of religious liberty, and shall probably be tossed in a blanket for my pains.

Conceive the horror of fourteen men hung yesterday! And yet it is difficult to blame the judges for it, though it would be some relief to be able to blame them. The murderers of Horsefall were all Methodists; one of them, I believe, a preacher.

I hope you will take a ramble to the North this year. You want a tour; nothing does you so much good. Come and alarm the village, as you did before. Your coming has produced the same impression as the march of Alexander or Bacchus over India, and will be as long remembered in the traditions of the innocent natives. They still believe Antonio to have been an ape. Pray accept a Yorkshire ham, which set off yesterday, directed to Lord Holland, St James's Square, by waggon which comes to the Bull and Mouth; it weighs twenty pounds. I mention these particulars, because, when a thing is sent, it may as well be received, and not be changed.

SYDNEY SMITH.

92.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Bath, January 24, 1813.

My dear Allen,

Vernon* has mistaken the object of my letter, and I have written to tell him so. I had no other object in writing to him than to say this: "Do not let the Archbishop imagine that I have either conceived or represented myself to be the martyr of his severity. I never thought I should be compelled, though I had no doubt I should be expected, to build, and fairly expected; and when any man who can command me to do a just thing, does not command me because he is afraid of appearing harsh, his forbearance is, and ought to be, as powerful as any mandate."

Vernon's reply to my first letter contains an express permission from the Archbishop to recede from my engagement, if I think fit. To this I have answered (with every expression of gratitude for the intention) that it comes too late; that I have incurred expenses and engagements which render it imprudent and impossible to retreat; that had I known myself two years ago to have been a free agent, as I now find I might have been, I would have set myself sincerely

* Mr Vernon Harcourt, son of the late Archbishop of York.

to work to find out some habitation without building; that I am convinced his Grace was misled by my light manner of talking of these matters, and never imagined me to be in earnest, or he would have expressed to me, when I made my promises, his opinion, which I have now received, and through the same friendly channel; lastly, that I believe, after all, I have done the wisest thing, and that by doing and suffering, I have no doubt of scrambling through my difficulties. This, said in as kind and civil a manner as I could adopt, was the substance of my answer to Vernon, and is of course my answer to the very kind and friendly remonstrances I have received from you.

When I say that I shall pass my life at Foston, I by no means intend to take a desponding view of my situation, or to doubt the kindness of those friends whom I love so sincerely, and from whom I have already received obligations which I never can forget while I can remember anything. But their power to do me good depends upon accidents upon which it would be folly in any man to found a regular calculation. Those accidental visitations of fortune are like prizes in the lottery, which must not be put into the year's income till they turn up. My fancy is my own: I may see as many crosiers in the clouds as I please; but when I sit down seriously to consider what I shall do upon important occasions, I must presume myself rector of Foston for life.

I shall be in town Wednesday night late, and stay only four or five days.

What you say about the Whigs, the measure you take of their usefulness, and of the share of power they may enjoy, is fair and reasonable.

Ever most truly yours,
SYDNEY SMITH.

93.] TO ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.

March 17, 1813.

My dear Bobus,

It seems to me a long time since I heard from you. Pray write to me, and if you are vexed, or uneasy, or dispirited, do not be too proud to say so.

I have heard about you from various good judges, all of whom concur in the statement made to me from Holland House; that the coach appeared to be made of admirable materials, and that its breaking down was a mere accident, for which it is impossible to account. I see you have spoken again, but your speech is only given in my three days' paper, and that very concisely. If you said

what you had to say without a fresh attack of nervousness, this is all I care about. If the body does not play you these tricks, I have no fear of the mind. By the by, you will laugh at me, but I am convinced a working senator should lead a life like an athlete. I wish you would let me send you a horse, and that you would ride every morning ten or fifteen miles before breakfast, and fling yourself into a profuse perspiration. No man ever stopped in a speech, that had perspired copiously that day. Do you disdain the assistance of notes?

I am going on prosperously with my buildings, but I am not yet out of sight of land. We most earnestly hope nothing will prevent you this year from coming down into Yorkshire. I have learnt to ride backwards and forwards to my living since I saw you, by which means I do not sleep away from home;—and I have found so good a manager of my accounts, that one day a week is sufficient for me to give up to my buildings.

When you have done anything that pleases yourself, write me word; it will give me the most unfeigned pleasure. Whether you turn out a consummate orator or not, will neither increase nor diminish my admiration for your talents or my respect for your character;—but when a man is strong, it is pleasant to make that strength respected;—and you will be happier for it, if you can do so (as I have no doubt you will soon).

My very kind love to Caroline and the children, and believe me ever your affectionate brother,

SYDNEY SMITH.

94.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

April 6, 1813.

Dear Jeffrey,

You write me a letter dated the 16th, in which you tell me you have sent me something; doubtless you suppose you have done so, but you have not. How goes on the next number? I am always afraid to ask this question, because I always expect to hear that the Review is dead or dying. I have but one occupation now,—building a house, which requires all my time and attention: I live trowel in hand.

I am much disappointed at ——. I had expected him to turn out a second Demosthenes, or even a second Jeffrey; how very much it must surprise you that anybody stops who has begun to speak!

I long very much to see you: we are old friends, I have a great affection for you, and admiration of your understanding, yet we

never meet; some spell binds you to Edinburgh,—that town where so many philosopers "think unknown, and waste no sweetness on the desert air."

The Miss —— are to come down to us in the month of June; why not come and marry ——? I will answer for it she will have you; by the by, I hear you are going to be married, but that I have heard so many times that it produces no impression on me. Mackintosh says you are the cleverest man he ever met with in his life.

SYDNEY SMITH.

95.] TO ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.

Heslington, York, May 10, 1813.

My dear Bobus,

Maria writes Mrs Sydney word that you are not quite so stout as you used to be. Pray take care of yourself. Let us contrive to last out for the same or nearly the same time: weary will be the latter half of my pilgrimage, if you leave me in the lurch!* By the by, I wish Mrs Smith and you would promise to inform me if you are ever seriously ill. I should come up to you at a moment's warning, and should be very unhappy if the opportunity were not given me of doing so.

I was very much pleased with Canning's additions to Grattan's Bills; they are very wise, because they give satisfaction to the great mass of fools, of whom the public is composed, and who really believe there is danger in conceding so much to the Catholics.

I cannot help detailing to you a remark of Douglas's, which in Scotland would be heard as of high metaphysical promise. Emily was asking why one flower was blue, and another pink, and another yellow. "Why, in short," said Douglas, "it is their *nature;* and when we say that, what do we mean? It is only another word for *mystery; it only means that we know nothing at all about the matter.*" This observation from a child eight years old is not common.

We are threatened with a visit from the excellent Greek, I understand, who is conducting his young warrior to the north. How contemptible our modern way of arming must appear to him! He will doubtless speak to the Colonel about the fighting in Homer, and the mode of it.

God bless you, dear Bobus! Love to your dear children.

SYDNEY SMITH.

* Mr Robert Smith died within a fortnight of his brother. See Memoir, page 260.—ED.

96.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington. No date: supposed about 1813.

My dear Jeffrey,

It is with great concern that I hear of your illness, and should be much obliged to you, if you have leisure, to write me a line to say how you are. I need not say how very happy we should be to see you here; and I wish you seriously to consider whether some time passed in the country will not tend more than anything else to establish your health. I know it is the season of law business, but *Editoris salus, suprema lex.*

I have been passing some weeks of dissipation in London; and was transformed by Circe's cup, not into a brute, but a beau. I am now eating the herb *moly* in the country. Near as the time approaches to the Review, I should not have been an idle contributor, but that I am forced to do many things for my brother Cecil, who has come from India in consequence of a quarrel with Sir G. Barlow, and who has much to arrange and settle with respect to the state of affairs there, and of Indian intrigues here. If I send you one or two light and insignificant articles, it will be all that I can possibly contribute. Do you mean to send me the lucubrations of Playfair and Knight touching Mr Copplestone?

I am sure you will excuse me for saying that I was struck with nothing in your "State of Parties" but its extreme temerity, and with the incorrectness of its statements. I was not struck with the good writing, because in you that is a matter of course; but I believe there never was so wrong an exposition of the political state of any country: to say we are approximating towards it, may be true; and so is a child just born approximating to old age. I believe you take your notions of the state of opinion in Britain, from the state of opinion among the commercial and manufacturing population of your own country; overlooking the great mass of English landed proprietors, who, leaning always a little towards the Crown, would still rally round the Constitution and moderate principles, whenever the state of affairs came to be such as to make their interference necessary. If this notion of your review were merely my own, I should send it with more of apology, but it is that of the most sensible men I have met.

And why do you not scout more that pernicious cant, that all men are equal? As politicians, they do not differ, as Locke thinks they do; but they differ enough to make you and all worthy men sincerely wish for the elevation of the one, and the rejection of the other.

God bless you, my dear Jeffrey! Get well; come here to do so. Accept my best wishes, and believe me affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

97.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Heslington, July 12, 1813.

My dear Murray,

I understand you are one of the Commissioners for managing the Edinburgh Review, in the absence of our small-bodied, great-minded leader. He has made to me an affecting appeal for assistance, and, for such as I can afford, shall not make it in vain; the difficulty is to find books, and I will review any two of the following —Clarkson's "Life of Penn," Buchanan's "Colonial Establishment," Thompson's "Travels in Sweden," Graham's "Residence in India," or Horsley's "Speeches." Have the goodness, if you please, to tell me which of these I shall take, and at what time I shall send them, giving me all the time you can, for I really am distressed for that article.

My situation is as follows:—I am engaged in agriculture without the slightest knowledge of the art; I am building a house without an architect; and educating a son without patience! Nothing short of my sincere affection for Jeffrey, and pity for his transatlantic loves, should have induced me to draw my goose-quill.

My new mansion springs up apace, and then I shall really have a pretty place to receive you in, and a pleasant country to show you. Remember me very kindly to all my friends, and believe me, my dear Murray, ever most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

98.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

August 18, 1813.

Dear Murray,

It is my serious intention to lend such aid as I can lend to the Review, in Jeffrey's absence. To render this intention useful, I hope he has left somebody who will look after the temporal concerns of the Review, and return an answer to those questions which a distant contributor must necessarily put. It was my intention to review Ferrier's "Theory of Apparitions;" but it is such a null, frivolous book, that it is impossible to take any notice of it. I request therefore the choice of these subjects:—Milne's Controversy with Marsh, Pouqueville's "Travels in the Morea," Brough-

ton's "Letters from a Mahratta Camp," or Sir J. Porter's "Account of the last Russian Campaign." I should prefer the first and the last. Pray let me know whether I may do them, or obtain, if you will be so good, an immediate answer for me from those with whom the power rests. I will take the first opportunity of returning Ferrier's "Apparitions" to Constable.

My brother and all his family are with me.

I am sorry to hear of the loss of your old friend; such losses are seldom or never repaired; a friend made at a middle period of life is never like a friend made at its beginning. I am sure a run in the country in England would do you good. It is the misfortune of Edinburgh men that they see no fools and common persons (I mean, of clever men in Edinburgh); I could put you on a salutary course of this sort of society. Ever most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

99.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Heslington, Sept. 1, 1813.

My dear Murray,

Barring accidents, I undertake for Broughton's "Letters from a Mahratta Camp," and Porter's "Russian Campaign;" perhaps also Milner and Marsh. I would with pleasure comply with your request about Walpole, but find a most alarming good-nature increasing upon me from year to year, which renders me almost incapable of the task; but I will try.

I do not want the proofs, if any of the commissioners will be so good as to attend to the corrections; for, I assure you, little Jeffrey sometimes leaves the printing in such a state of *absolute nonsense* as throws me into the coldest of sweats.

Yours, my dear Murray, very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

100.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

September 17, 1813.

Dear Lady Holland,

Few events are of so little consequence as the fecundity of a clergyman's wife; still your kind dispositions towards me justify me in letting you know that Mrs Sydney and her new-born son are both extremely well. His name will be Grafton, and I shall bring him up a Methodist and a Tory. Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

101.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

October 15, 1813.

My dear Murray,

I am quite ashamed of not having better fulfilled my promise; but, first, Mrs Sydney has been confined; second, I am building a house; third, educating a son; fourth, entering upon a farm; fifth, after reading half through Porter's "Russian Campaign," I find it such an incorrigible mass of folly and stupidity, that nothing could be said of it but what was grossly abusive.

I have read the controversy about the Auxiliary Bible Society, and will speedily send you an article upon it.

SYDNEY SMITH.

I can give you no account of Mackintosh, nor tell you how he is to be stimulated.

102.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

November 29, 1813.

My dear Murray,

I am sorry the editors of the Review should so construe my article as to suppose it inimical to the free circulation of the Scriptures. I do not dissuade anybody from circulating the Scriptures; but merely say to a particular body of men, "You are bound in consistency to circulate the Scriptures with the Prayer-book, in preference to any other method." Nothing can be more ridiculous than the whole contest; but as it exists, I thought it right to notice it. Pray regulate the pecuniary concerns of the Review as you think best, and I shall be obliged to you to return my review when you have an opportunity of procuring a frank.

I am ashamed to say I have not read Brougham's article upon education; but I stated my argument to him in the summer, and he completely acquiesced in it.

I remain, dear Murray, in haste, yours very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

103.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Heslington, Jan. 13, 1814.

My dear Allen,

I did not know before your letter that Lord Holland had been ill, and I received the intelligence, as you may suppose, with sincere regret. It is very easy and old-womanish to offer advice, but

I wish he would leave off wine entirely, after the manner of the Sharpe and Rogers school. He is never guilty of excess; but there is a certain respectable and dangerous plenitude, not quite conducive to that state of health which all his friends most wish to Lord Holland.

What can you possibly mean by lamenting the restoration of the Bourbons? What so likely to promote renewed peace, and enable the French to lay some slight foundation of real liberty? for as to their becoming free at once, it is a mere joke. I think I see your old Edinburgh hatred of the Bourbons; but the misfortunes of the world have been such as to render even these contemptible personages our hope and our refuge.

We are all well, and I persevere in my intention of entering on my new house on the 25th of March.

I hear great complaints of Mackintosh's review of Madame de Staël, as too laudatory. Of this I cannot judge, as I have not read the original; but the review itself is very splendid, though (as is the case with all these polishers of precious stones) I remember of old many of the phrases and many of the opinions.

I am going to educate my little boy till he is twelve years old, being at present nine; and if I could get a clever boy to educate with him, I should be glad to do so. I would not take any boy who was not quick and clever, for such (unless the ordinary partiality of a parent mislead me) is Douglas; but I rather suppose it is too far from town for these sort of engagements.

There is a bad account of ——, and no wonder; the loss has been very severe, and he has never met with any check, but gone away before the wind all his life.

It will be very kind of you to write me a line now and then, and if you will have the goodness to do this, pray let me know how Mackintosh's speech went off: I have only the account of an honest citizen of York.

Pray tell Lady Holland I am a Justice of the Peace,—one of those rural tyrants so deprecated by poor Windham. I am determined to strike into the line of analogous punishments.

Ever most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

104.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Heslington, March, 1814.

My dear Jeffrey,

When I tell you this is the last week of my old house, and that we are in all the agonies of departure and of packing up, you will

excuse me that I have not written to you before. Accept my sincere congratulations, offered deliberately and upon reflection. The heart of man must have its cravings satisfied, as well as those of his belly. You have got a wife,—that is, something to love,—and you will be all the happier for it! I pronounce my benediction on the whole business.

I am obliged to you for the Review, which I have not had time to read. Brougham is, I believe, at York; but I have been away since the Circuit entered, and living at my farmhouse lodgings, to superintend my buildings.

Pray explain to me what is or was intended, respecting the statues of Playfair and Stewart. I object to the marble compliment: it should have been a compliment in oil-paint, or, if marble, should have come down only to the shoulders; for if Playfair and Stewart (excellent men and writers as they are) are allowed marble from top to toe, what is there left for Newton, Washington, and Lord Wellington? My dilemma in this laudatory scheme is this:—if Playfair and Stewart do not see the error and impropriety of the plan, they are not worthy of a statue; and if they do, it would be exceedingly wrong to erect one to them! People in England have a very bad habit of laughing at Scotch economy; and the supposition was that the statue was to be Janiform, with Playfair's face on one side, and Stewart's on the other; and it certainly would effect a reduction in price, though it would be somewhat singular.

I have not read a paper for these four days; but this lingering war will not do for Buonaparte. The white cockade will be up, if he do not proceed more rapidly. I have no doubt but that the Bourbons must have a very large party in France, consisting of all those who love stability and peace better than eternal war and agitation; but these men have necessarily a great dread of Buonaparte,—a great belief in his skill, fortune, and implacability. It will take them years after he is killed to believe that he is dead.

Can I be of any service for the next number of the Review? I shall be very happy to be so, if anything occur, and if (as I now think I shall have) I have leisure to attend to it. We are all extremely well; Mrs Sydney, never better. Pray remember me, dear Jeffrey, and say a good word for me if I die first. I shall say many for you in the contrary event!

When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days I passed there, amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings!

Ever your most sincere friend,

S. S.

105.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

March 10, 1814.

Dear Allen,

I cannot at all enter into your feelings about the Bourbons, nor can I attend to so remote an evil as the encouragement to superstitious attachment to kings, when the proposed evil of a military ministry, or of thirty years more of war, is before my eyes. I want to get rid of this great disturber of human happiness, and I scarcely know any price too great to effect it. If you were sailing from Alicant to Aleppo in a storm, and, after the sailors had held up the image of a saint and prayed to it, the storm were to abate, you would be more sorry for the encouragement of superstition than rejoiced at the preservation of your life; and so would every other man born and bred in Edinburgh.

My views of the matter would be much shorter and coarser: I should be so glad to find myself alive, that I should not care a farthing if the storm had generated a thousand new, and revived as many old saints. How can any man stop in the midst of the stupendous joy of getting rid of Buonaparte, and prophesy a thousand little peddling evils that will result from restoring the Bourbons? The most important of all objects is the independence of Europe: it has been twice very nearly destroyed by the French; it is menaced from no other quarter; the people must be identified with their sovereign. There is no help for it; it will teach them in future to hang kings who set up for conquerors. I will not believe that the Bourbons have no party in France. My only knowledge of politics is from the York paper; yet nothing shall convince me that the people are not heartily tired of Buonaparte, and ardently wish for the cessation of the conscription; that is, for the Bourbons.

I shall be in my house by the 25th of March, in spite of all the evils that are prophesied against me. I have had eleven fires burning night and day for these two months past.

I am glad to hear that the intention of raising a statue to Playfair and Stewart is now reported to have been only a joke. This is *wut*, not *wit;* by way of pleasantry, the oddest conceit I have heard of; but you gentlemen from the North are, you know, a little singular in your conceptions of the *lepid*. I quoted to Whishaw the behaviour of —— ——, under similar circumstances; I wonder if Stewart and Playfair would have behaved with as much modesty, had this joke dropped down into a matter of fact.

We are all well; but Douglas alarmed us the other night with the croup. I darted into him all the mineral and vegetable re-

sources of the shops,—cravatted his throat with blisters, and fringed it with leeches, and set him in five or six hours to playing marbles, breathing gently and inaudibly.

Pray send me some news when there is any. It is very pleasant in these deserts to see the handwriting of an old friend; it is like the print in the sand seen by Robinson Crusoe.

I am reading Neale's "History of the Puritans;" read it if you have never read it, and make my Lady read it. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

106.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, April, 1814.

Dear Allen,

I write you a short note to thank you sincerely for your friendly advice on going into my house. My great dread is not of damp, but of cold damp; and therefore I trust to excellent fires, to be kept up night and day; and the first week has justified my confidence. I am very much pleased with my house. I aimed at making a snug parsonage, and I think I have succeeded. I hope, one day or other, you will criticise from the spot.

I am sorry to see the war degenerating into a war of dynasties,—the great evil to be dreaded from a weak Administration, and into which they seem to have completely fallen.

I should be very glad to come to town a little this spring, but I am afraid I cannot; I shall however make an effort. I wish you had said a word about Lord and Lady Holland. Pray give to them my best and kindest regards. Yours, &c.,

SYDNEY SMITH.

107.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Foston, June 25, 1814.

My dear Lady Holland,

I set off on Tuesday morning, and reached home on Wednesday night by ten o'clock, finding everybody very well, and delighting them not a little next day by the display of your French presents; but of this Mrs Sydney will speak herself.

I liked London better than ever I liked it before, and simply, I believe, from water-drinking. Without this, London is stupefaction and inflammation. It is not the love of wine, but thoughtlessness and unconscious imitation: other men poke out their hands for the revolving wine, and one does the same, without thinking of it.

All people above the condition of labourers are ruined by excess of stimulus and nourishment, clergy included. I never yet saw any gentleman who ate and drank as little as was reasonable.

I am uneasy, dear Lady Holland, at your going abroad. Consider what it is to be well. If I were you, I would not stir from Holland House for two years; and then, as many jolts and frights as you please, which at present you are not equal to. I should think you less to blame if the world had anything new to show you; but you have seen the Parthian, the Mede, &c. &c. &c.; no variety of garment can surprise you, and the roads upon the earth are as well known to you as the wrinkles in ——'s face.

Be wise, my dear lady, and re-establish your health in that gilded room which furnishes better and pleasanter society than all the wheels in the world can whirl you to. Believe me, dear Lady Holland, your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

108.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

1814.

My dear Jeffrey,

I am much obliged to you for the Review, and shall exercise the privilege of an old friend in making some observations upon it. I have not read the review of Wordsworth, because the subject is to me so very uninteresting; but, may I ask, do not such repeated attacks upon a man wear in some little degree the shape of persecution?

Without understanding anything of the subject, I was much pleased with the "Cassegrainian Telescope," as it seemed modest, moderate in rebuke, and to have the air of wisdom and erudition. The account of Scotch husbandry is somewhat coxcombical, and has the fault of digressing too much into political economy; but I should guess it to be written by a very good farmer;—I mean, by a man thoroughly acquainted with the method in which the art is carried on. I delight in the article on Carnot; it is virtuous and honourable to do justice to such a man. I should guess that the travels of the Frenchman in England are those of your friend and relation, M. Simond.

With respect to what you say of your occasional feelings of disgust at your office of editor, and half-formed intentions of giving it up, I think you should be slow to give up so much emolument, now that you are married and may have a family; but if you can get as great an income by your profession, and the two cannot be combined, I would rather see you a great lawyer than a witty journalist.

There can be no doubt which is the most honourable and lucrative situation, and not much doubt which is the most useful.

It will give us the greatest pleasure to see you in the spring, or, if not then, in your excursion to France. I like my new house very much; it is very comfortable, and, after finishing it, I would not pay sixpence to alter it; but the expense of it will keep me a very poor man, a close prisoner here for my life, and render the education of my children a difficult exertion for me. My situation is one of great solitude; but I preserve myself in a state of cheerfulness and tolerable content, and have a propensity to amuse myself with trifles. I hope I shall write something before I grow old, but I am not certain whether I am sufficiently industrious.

I shall never apologise to you for egotism; I think very few men, writing to their friends, have enough of it. If Horner were to break fifteen of his ribs, or marry, or resolve to settle in America, he would never mention it to his friends; but would write with the most sincere kindness from Kentucky, to inquire for your welfare, leaving you to marvel as you chose at the post-mark, and to speculate whether it was Kentucky or Kensington.

I think very highly of "Waverley," and was inclined to suspect, in reading it, that it was written by Miss Scott of Ancram.

I am truly glad to read of your pleasure from your little girl and your château. The haunts of Happiness are varied, and rather unaccountable; but I have more often seen her among little children, and home firesides, and in country-houses, than anywhere else,—at least, I think so. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

109.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

February 1, 1815.

My dear Lady Holland,

Many thanks for your letter. I think you very fortunate in having Rogers at Rome. Show me a more kind and friendly man; secondly, one, from good manners, knowledge, fun, taste, and observation, more agreeable; thirdly, a man of more strict political integrity, and of better character in private life. If I were to choose any Englishman in foreign parts whom I should wish to blunder upon, it should be Rogers.

Lord —— paid a visit to a family whom he had not visited since the capture of the Bastille, and apologised for not having called before; in the meantime, the estate had passed through two different races.

We have stayed at Castle Howard for two or three days. I

found Lord Carlisle very good-natured, and even kind; with considerable talents for society, a very good understanding, and no more visible consequence, as a nobleman, than he had a fair right to assume. Lady Carlisle seems thoroughly amiable. I soon found myself at my ease at Castle Howard, which will make an agreeable variety in my existence. Lord Morpeth and Lady Georgiana called upon us; we have, in short, experienced very great civility from them. Lord and Lady Carlisle called upon us twice, and were overwhelmed in a ploughed field!

SYDNEY SMITH.

110.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Foston, 1815.

Dear Lady Holland,

I thought you would have written me a line upon your first coming, but I thought also you were ill; and as I get older, I make more and more allowance for the omnipotence of indolence, under whose dominion friend, lover, client, patron, satirist, and sycophant so often yield up their respective energies.

I am not always confident of your friendship for me, at particular times; but I have great confidence in it, from one end of the year to another: above all, I am confident that I have a great affection for you.

I hear that Ward is in London. He follows you across Europe, and you him, but you never meet; I suppose your mutual gratification is to be in the same city;—the purest and least sensual passion I ever heard of, and such as I did not suppose to exist but in the books of knights-errant.

SYDNEY SMITH.

111.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date: about 1815.

I hope the Lady Holland finds herself well, and brings with her a gay and healthy train;—that all are well, from Cleopatra the queen to Antonio the page.

Though I have no great affection for poverty at any time, it is on such occasions as these that I owe it the greatest grudge. If I were a Dean, I certainly would congratulate you in person, and not by letter. I missed you all very much in my last visit to London, which in other respects was a very agreeable one.

I will not say a word about politics, or make the slightest allusion to a small rocky island in the middle of the Atlantic, the final cause of which now seems to be a little clearer; but I may say he gives up too soon,—his resistances are not sufficiently desperate. I may say also, that I admire him for not killing himself, which is, in a soldier, easy, vulgar, and commonly foolish; it shows that he has a strong tendency to hope, or that he has a confidence in his own versatility of character, and his means of making himself happy by trifling, or by intellectual exertion.

Now pray do settle in England, and remain quiet; depend upon it, it is the most agreeable place. I have heard five hundred travelled people assert that there is no such agreeable house in Europe as Holland House: why should you be the last person to be convinced of this, and the first to make it true?

Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

112.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

1815.

My dear Lord Holland,

I am totally unacquainted with the two tutors I recommended to B——, but they were recommended to me from a quarter in which I could perfectly confide. My *desiderata* were, that they should possess a good deal of knowledge, and that they should be virtuous and good-tempered men. B——'s son I understood to be an ordinary young man, and not requiring a person of more than common judgment and dexterity; and therefore as much was proved to me as I required to be proved before I recommended. I can satisfy you in the same particulars by the same inquiry; but whether the individual asked for may possess the sense, firmness, and judgment necessary to manage such a clever boy as ——, I cannot determine, as I have not sufficient confidence, upon points of this nature, in the person to whom my questions are addressed.

If the Universities were well sifted and swept for you, the best person to get would be a Cambridge-man, or, at least, some man from an English university; but then he would require a great deal of attention, would be troublesome from the jealousy of being slighted, and would be altogether an unpleasant inmate. I therefore put Englishmen out of the question. All things considered, they would not do for you. I look upon Switzerland as an inferior sort of Scotland, and am for a Scotchman. A Scotchman full of knowledge, quiet, humble, assiduous, civil and virtuous, you will easily get; and I will send you such a one per coach, or (which he will like better) per waggon, any day; but will he command the

respect of ——? Will he acquire an ascendancy over him? Will he be a man of good sound sense and firmness? Here I cannot help you, because I know nobody *myself;* and, in a recommendation I should have so much at heart, I should choose to judge for myself.

I do not know the name of the ex-tutor, or where he is; but will write to-night, inquire every particular, state generally what is wanted, without mentioning names, and send you the answer.

It will be hardly possible for you and Lady Holland to consent to such a plan; but I should have thought that a tutor with three or four pupils, forty or fifty miles from London, would be the best arrangement. They abound, their characters are accessible, they are near, and among five hundred schoolmasters it may not be impossible to find a man of sense. But perhaps health would be an objection to this; though I must observe that the health of very delicate children very often improves, in proportion as they are removed from the perilous kindness of home.

Mr —— always seemed to me an excellent and accomplished; but a very foolish, man. There is very little mother-wit in the world, but a great deal of clergy.

I remain always, my dear Lord Holland, with the most sincere attachment and affection,

SYDNEY SMITH.

113.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Bath, 1816.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have a fancy to know how you do, and what has befallen you since your journey to Foston. I write this from Bath, where I am living, on a visit to my father. I shall not be in London before the month of May; have I any chance of seeing you there?

Lord and Lady Byron are, you know, separated. He said to Rogers, that Lady Byron had parted with him, apparently in good friendship, on a visit to her father, and that he had no idea of their being about to part, when he received her decision to that effect. He stated that his own temper, naturally bad, had been rendered more irritable by the derangement of his fortune—and that Lady Byron was entirely blameless. The truth is, he is a very unprincipled fellow.

Leach will be Chancellor: I had heard last year that he was strongly solicited, by that bribe, to desert his party, and at last I see his virtue has given way. I have heard nothing of ——'s success; but what success can any man obtain,—on what side

(Ireland excepted) can the Administration be assailed with any chance of success?

Madame de Staël is at Pisa, attending Rocca, who is dying. Have you read Stewart's preliminary dissertation? What do you think of it? He is an excellent man. How does Brown's new poem turn out?

I beg, my dear Jeffrey, you will not class me amongst the tribe of irritable correspondents; unless I write to you upon points of business, I hold it to be perfectly fair for you to answer me or not, and that you may keep the most profound silence, "salvâ amicitiâ," but it always gives me sincere pleasure to hear from you. I shall be here till about the 20th. Pray remember me very kindly to Murray and all friends.

SYDNEY SMITH.

114.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, 1816.

Dear Jeffrey,

I should have set off this day for Lord Grey and you, but Douglas was seized with typhus fever, and Mrs Sydney hurried up to London. He is much better, and will do well if there is no relapse; in the meantime, I am prisoner here, because I must be jailer to my three remaining children. I was a good deal surprised to see in the "Times" a part of my review on the Abbé Georgel quoted before the Review is published; is this quite right on the part of Constable? I am truly sorry to lose my visit to you, and the more so, because I know you are not quite well. Pray say how that is, and promise me amendment in this respect.

I have two short reviews to write of two French books,—Madame d'Épinay and Madame de Genlis, and then I am at a loss for a subject. The trial of Horne I relinquished on account of the invincible candour of my nature. Pray answer all my queries distinctly; and how happy should I be if you would dictate your letters, and not write them yourself! I can scarcely ever read them.

I have just now received your letter, and am truly afflicted to receive so melancholy an account of your health; and the more so, as I had not a suspicion, before Murray's letter, that you were at all ill. For God's sake be wise and obedient and meek to your bloody butchers, and let me hear from you very soon. I have a letter from Mrs Sydney this morning; Douglas very weak, and I hardly think will remain in London.

SYDNEY SMITH.

115.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

February 2, 1816.

My dear Lady Holland,

My father seems to bear his great misfortune with equanimity. He is as well as he was fifteen years ago, and as young, at the nominal age of seventy-six. My sister was a most amiable and enlightened woman: she had run through all the stamina of constitution nature had allotted her, and died of old age, in youth. The loss of a person whom I would have cultivated as a friend, if nature had not given her to me as a relation, is a serious evil.

I thank you most sincerely for your very handsome and delightful present, of Madame de Sévigné, which will beguile many a Yorkshire hour.

SYDNEY SMITH.

116.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

August, 1816.

Dear Lord Holland,

I can buy you some sheep by means of the agent I employ for myself; but, then, there is a history to tell. I live only "from hand to mouth" (as the common people say), and for weeks together I am not master of ten pounds, nor do I know where to get as much; therefore you must give me a power of drawing on your bankers for any sum not exceeding ninety pounds, which will more than cover every possible expense, though I hope they will be bought much more advantageously. You will, I am sure, excuse my frankness; but it may very possibly happen, when the time comes for buying the sheep, that I may be entirely without money. I will write to Johnson; but I think the better way would be to send them at once to Holland House. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

117.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

York, Nov. 3, 1816.

If you and Lord Grey will consider yourselves as solemnly pledged to me not to reveal the contents of the enclosed note, open it, and you will read a marriage which will make you laugh. If you cannot give that pledge, fling it into the fire. I am quite serious in exacting the pledge, and as serious in assuring you, dear Lady Grey, of my great regard and respect.

SYDNEY SMITH.

[*Enclosed Note.*]

Sorry to treat with apparent harshness one whom I so much re-

spect, but cannot grant your Ladyship the slightest indulgence. On the contrary, must prohibit, in the severest manner, the disclosure of the secret, either to aliens or your own blood.

Though necessity compels me to this rigour, I feel for your situation, and am not without fears for your health; you should avoid meat and wine, and live with the greatest care, till relief can be gained by disclosure. I assure you that the information is no joke on my part. I sincerely believe it myself, for it comes to me from a source that I must consider to be unquestionable. I remain, dear Lady Grey, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

118.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

November 8, 1816.

My dear Lady Holland,

I found and left Lord Grey in very good health. He is extremely pleased with the match, and most probably rightly pleased. We had, at Howick, Sir —— ——, with whom I was much taken; quick, shrewd, original, well-informed, eccentric, paradoxical, and contradictory.

It is not possible to speak of Horner! I have a most sincere affection for him.

I found everywhere in Northumberland and Scotland wretched crops, failing tenants, and distressed landlords (unlike Atlas), bending down with the weight of land suddenly flung upon their shoulders.

Lord Morpeth called here the other day. I esteem myself most fortunate in being near so excellent and enlightened a man, and will cultivate him as much as he will let me. I am concerned to hear of Lord Holland's gout. I observe that gout loves ancestors and genealogy; it needs five or six generations of gentlemen or noblemen to give it its full vigour. Allen deserves the gout more than Lord Holland. I have seen the latter personage resorting occasionally to plain dishes, but Allen passionately loves complexity and artifice in his food.

I suppose Samuel Rogers it mortgaged to your Ladyship for the autumn and the early part of the winter. Perhaps you would have the goodness to say, that Miss —— thinks him charming! Next to the Congreve rocket, he is the most mischievous and powerful of modern inventions.

I have now read three volumes of Madame de Sévigné, with a conviction that her letters are very much over-praised. Mr Thomas Grenville says he has made seven vigorous attacks upon Madame de Sévigné, and has been as often repulsed. I presume you have

read "Rhoda;" if not, read it, at my peril. I was pestered into reading it, and felt myself very much obliged to my persecutors.

I think of my visit to Holland House last summer with the greatest pleasure, and hope to renew it again this year, if I am rich enough. I promise to be agreeable.

Always your grateful and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

119.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Foston, Nov. 16, 1816.

My dear Lady Holland,

I am as sensible of the advantages of bringing my children to London as any one can be. I like to be there myself, and nobody enjoys more sincerely the society of friends; but the duties of economy are paramount. Such slender means as mine admit of no imprudence and no excess.

Yours, dear Lady Holland, most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

120.] TO FRANCIS HORNER, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 25, 1816.

My dear Horner,

Since I saw you, I have paid a visit to Lord Grey. I met there Lambton, the about-to-be son-in-law; a clever person. To him and Sir —— ——, and Sir —— ——, with whom I was very much pleased. I have seldom seen a more original or a quicker man; eccentric, and affecting to be more so than he is, as is the case commonly with eccentric persons. From Lord Grey's I went to visit ——, whom I found unchanged, except that they are become a little more Methodistical. I endeavour in vain to give them more cheerful ideas of religion; to teach them that God is not a jealous, childish, merciless tyrant; that he is best served by a regular tenor of good actions,—not by bad singing, ill-composed prayers, and eternal apprehensions. But the luxury of false religion is, to be unhappy!

I went in quest of schools for Douglas. At Ripon I found an insignificant man, in melancholy premises, and boys two in a bed. At Richmond I was extremely pleased with Mr Tate, who takes thirty boys, and appears to be a very enlightened man. Westminster costs about £150 or £200 per annum. I have little to do, and am extremely poor. Why not keep Douglas at home till he is

sixteen, send him for three years to Mr Tate, then to Cambridge? I cannot think that his moral or literary improvement will be less; at the same time, if it were my duty to make the sacrifice, of course, *I would* make it, but, after all the attention I can give to it, I cannot discover a better plan, even if I had £10,000 per annum; of course it is taken for granted that I am able to teach him well, and that I shall stick to my duty.*

It gives us the greatest pleasure to find you have got so far so well. Our kindest affections and warmest good wishes move on with you, and hang like a dew on the glasses of your carriage. God bless you, my dear Horner!

SYDNEY SMITH.

121.] TO FRANCIS HORNER, ESQ.

Foston, 1816.

My dear Horner,

We are tolerably well pleased with the account you give of yourself. It would have been unreasonable to expect that you could gain anything during the fatigue of travelling; it is much that you have not lost. Now is your beginning! I hope you will have the resolution to withstand the importunities of friends, and hermetically to seal yourself. Dear little F—— A—— has the best heart in the world, but you must not let her excite you to much talking. If —— were at Pisa, you would of course order horses.

I have just read Dugald Stewart's "Preliminary Dissertations." In the first place, it is totally clear of all his defects. No insane dread of misrepresentation; no discussion put off till another time, just at the moment it was expected, and would have been interesting; no unmanly timidity; less formality of style and cathedral pomp of sentence. The good, it would be trite to enumerate:—the love of human happiness and virtue, the ardour for the extension of knowledge, the command of fine language, happiness of allusion, varied and pleasing literature, tact, wisdom, and moderation! Without these high qualities, we all know Stewart cannot write. I suspect he has misrepresented Horne Tooke, and his silence respecting Hartley is very censurable. I was amazingly pleased with his comparison of the Universities to enormous hulks confined with mooring-chains, everything flowing and progressing around them. Nothing can be more happy.

I speak of books as I read them, and I read them as I can get them. You are read up to twelve o'clock of the preceding day, and therefore must pardon the staleness of my subjects. I read yesterday the evidence of the Elgin Marble Committee. Lord

* Mr Horner was Douglas's godfather.

Elgin has done a very useful thing in taking them away from the Turks. Do not throw pearls to swine; and take them away from swine when they are so thrown. They would have been destroyed there, or the French would have had them. He is underpaid for them. Flaxman's evidence (some little ostentation excepted) is very ingenious. Payne Knight makes a very poor figure;—unshaken confidence, upon the most scanty foundations.

We are all perfectly well. Corn is rather bad than dear, but makes good unleavened bread; and the poor, I find, seldom make any other than unleavened bread, even in the best seasons. I have seen nobody, and heard from nobody, since I last wrote. Seven years' absence from London is too severe a trial for correspondents. Even Astrea Whishaw has given way.

I remain always your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

122.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Sedgeley, Jan. 6, 1817.

Dear Lady Mary Bennett,

I think it was rather bad taste on my part to speak of the Princess as a royal person, when you were lamenting her loss as an acquaintance; but I am very jealous of the monarchical feelings of this country.

I do not know whether you are acquainted with the Philips with whom I am now staying; he is very rich, the discoverer of cotton, and an old friend of mine. I am going to preach a charity sermon next Sunday. I desire to make three or four hundred weavers cry, which it is impossible to do since the late rise in cottons.

And now, dear Lady Mary, do you want anything in the flowered cotton, or Manchester velvet, or chintz line? Remember, this is not a town where there are only a few shops, but it is the great magazine from which flow all the mercers' shops in the known world. Here tabbies and tabinets are first concocted! Here muslin—elementary, rudimental, early, primeval muslin—is meditated; broad and narrow sarsnet first see the light, and narrow and broad edging! Avail yourself, dear lady, of my being here to prepare your conquering armour for your next campaign.

I shall be in town by the end of march, and shall have real pleasure in seeing you. I think you begin to feel at ease in my company: certainly, you were much improved in that particular the last time we met. God bless you! I admire you very much, and praise you often.

SYDNEY SMITH.

123.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

March 13, 1817.

My dear Lord Holland,

Nobody, I assure you, is more desirous of living at ease than I am; but I should prefer the approbation of such men as the Duke of Bedford and yourself, to the most unwieldy bishopric obtained by means you would condemn and despise. Doubtless, when you think of that amorous and herbivorous parish of Covent Garden, and compare it with my agricultural benefice, you will say, "Better is the dinner of herbs where love is, than the stalled ox," &c. &c. Be this as it may, my best thanks are due to you for your kind exertions in my favour; but you and Lady Holland are full of kindness to me on all occasions: you know how sincerely I am attached to you both.

I entirely agree to, and sympathise with, your opposition to the suspension: nothing can be more childish and more mischievous. Christianity in danger of being written down by doggrel rhymes! England about to be divided into little parcels, like a chess-board! The flower and chivalry of the realm flying before one armed apothecary!

How can old Mother G—— and Mother F—— swallow such trash as this?

I say nothing of the great and miserable loss we have all sustained. He will always live in our recollection; and it will be useful to us all, in the great occasions of life, to reflect how Horner would act and think in them, if God had prolonged his life.

Ever, my dear Lord Holland, most truly and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

124.] TO JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

March 26, 1817.

My dear Whishaw,

. . . . . .

It will give us the most sincere pleasure to see you here, if it is in your power to reach us. Let us detain you (if you do come) as long as your other avocations will permit.

I am not without hopes of being in town, but do not like leaving the country without collecting the little rents that are due to me; indeed, if I omitted that ceremony before leaving my friends, I most probably should never see them again. Lord Holland has told you

the danger I was exposed to, of becoming rector of Covent Garden, of hortescortical notoriety. I think this is placing a clergyman in the van of the battle.

I had a letter yesterday from Philips; he begins to tremble for Manchester. In this part of the country, there is not the slightest degree of distress among the poor. Everybody is employed, and at fair wages; but we are purely agricultural. I was surprised to find Bobus among the anti-alarmists; he does not always keep such good company.

We saw Jeffrey on his way down. I should be glad to know whether he made a good figure in the House of Lords, and produced any effect. I had not seen him for some time, and found him improved in manner; in essentials he cannot improve.

Ever, dear Whishaw, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

125.] TO GEORGE PHILIPS, ESQ., M.P.

Foston, July 25, 1817.

My dear Philips,

Your letter gave Mrs Sydney and me great pleasure. Once out of London you will rapidly recover;—and here, my dear Philips, let me warn you against the melancholy effects of temperance. You will do me the justice to remember how often I have entered my protest against it: depend upon it, the wretchedness of human life is only to be encountered upon the basis of meat and wine.

Poor Ponsonby is numbered with the just. I had a letter last week from Lord Grey, lamenting his loss in very feeling terms.

Brougham is here, that is, at York. Scarlett is detained in town, and does not come for the first week. I hope you are pleased with the spirit of the magistrates. Lord —— has lived long among them, and they knew him to be a fool; this is a great advantage. At this distance from London no magistrate believes that a Secretary of State *can* be a fool. I am much pleased with the St Helena manuscript,—it seems smartly written, and full of good sense; it is a very good imitation of what Buonaparte might have said.

It will give us great pleasure to come to you this year. I hope nothing will happen to prevent it; though it commonly happens, when a person is just going to set out for any place where he wishes to go, that he falls down and breaks his leg in two places; or, having arrived, is seized with a scarlet fever; or is forced to return, hearing that his son's eye is knocked out by a cricket-ball.

I sincerely hope, my dear Philips, that you are recovering your strength rapidly, and that, in the enjoyment of your pretty place,

you will forget your past severe sufferings. Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

126.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

July 31, 1817.

My dear Lady Holland,

I write to you from Scarborough, with a clear view of the Hague and Amsterdam.

. . . . . .

It is very curious to consider in what manner Horner gained, in so extraordinary a degree, the affections of such a number of persons of both sexes,—all ages, parties, and ranks in society; for he was not remarkably good-tempered, nor particularly lively and agreeable; and an inflexible politician on the unpopular side. The causes are, his high character for probity, honour, and talents; his fine countenance; the benevolent interest he took in the concerns of all his friends; his simple and gentlemanlike manners; his untimely death.

SYDNEY SMITH.

127.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Scarborough, August 15, 1817.

My dear Sir,

I received your note at Scarborough, where I am with my brother, his family, and my father. From this place they all go to my house at Foston, and there they must be packed by ——'s condensing machine. Under these circumstances, it will be quite impossible to enjoy the pleasure of your company. Some other time I hope I shall be more fortunate. I am truly obliged to you for your friendly intention and recollection of my invitation.

Our friend Philips is getting much better, and is making very laudable resolutions of intemperance, having been very much blamed by Baillie for his abstemious habits.

I remain, dear Davenport, sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

128.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Foston, York, Oct. 3, 1817.

My dear Murray,

Nothing can be more unjust and natural than the conduct of

parents in placing their children. They have recourse to ten thousand advisers, and appeal to each as if their whole confidence were placed in him. Somebody has now advised Mr B—— that Mr —— is the best tutor in Edinburgh; and to Mr ——, I presume, his son will go. I am extremely sorry for all the trouble I have given you, but as my residence in Scotland is so well known, appeals to me are made from intimate friends; and what can I do? The same thing may happen to you about English schools, and then you may take your revenge upon me.

If ever you find yourself in an idle mood, I wish you would send me an accurate account of what is done in the High School at Edinburgh. Jeffrey descanted upon that subject: but with all my love and respect for him, I find it quite impossible to believe, though I acquitted him, of course, of any intentional misrepresentation; but every young gentleman of twelve years of age appeared far superior to Henry Stephens or his footman Scapula.

Jeffrey has thrashed —— happily and deservedly;—but is it not time now to lay up his cudgel? Heads that are plastered and trepanned all over are no longer fit for breaking.

M——, I see, retires from his present situation, to sit in judgment upon the lives and properties of his fellow-creatures. When a man is a fool, in England we only trust him with the immortal concerns of human beings.

Believe me, ever most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

129.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, November, 1817.

Dear Lady Mary,

I have not written to you, because I have been very busy; but I always felt that I ought, and that I wished, to write to you.

We pressed —— to stay longer, but she is a great politician, and has some mysterious reasons for returning, which I could not fathom, though I let down my deep-sea line; probably they are connected with the present precarious state of the Bourbons, and the lingering and protracted war carried on in the Spanish colonies. The natives admired her eyes very much, and said they were very different from Yorkshire eyes. They indeed express every soft and amiable virtue, with just as much of wickedness as is necessary to prevent insipidity.

I ought to apologise to you for not having said anything of the Princess. Youth and fertility quenched by death is a melancholy event, let the rank of the victim be what it may; but her death is

not of any *political* importance; the root remains deep in the earth, and it matters not which becomes the leading shoot.

I shall bring up your friend Douglas to Westminster after Easter, when I hope, my dear little friend, to see you in town. I shall have a mean idea of your powers, if, between coaxing, scolding, plaguing, and reasoning, you cannot make Lord Tankerville take a house.

I always tell you all the books worth notice that I read, and I rather counsel you to read Jacob's "Spain," a book with some good sense in it, and not unentertaining; also, by all means, the first volume of Franklin's Letters. I will disinherit you if you do not admire everything written by Franklin. In addition to all other good qualities, he was thoroughly honest.

We have had Sir Humphry Davy here. A spurious Aladdin has sprung up in Northumberland, and pretends that the magical lamp belongs to him. There is no end to human presumption and arrogance,—though nobody has as yet pretended to be Lady Mary Bennett.

SYDNEY SMITH.

130.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, 1817.

Dear Lady Mary,

There never was better venison, or venison treated with more respect and attention. Chillingham is a place of the greatest merit.

I envy Brougham his trip to Paris. There is nothing (except the pleasure of seeing you) I long for so much as to see Paris, and I pray my life may be spared for this great purpose, or rather these great purposes. Easter will do for the first, as I shall be in town about that time. My brother and his family quit us on Monday for Bowood. A house emptied of its guests is always melancholy for the first three or four days. Their loss will be supplied by Sir Humphry and Lady Davy, who are about to pay us a visit next week.

I have not framed your drawing yet, because I want another to accompany it, and then they shall both go up together. I do not know whether this is *exigeant* or not; but I have so great an idea of your fertility in these matters, that I consider a drawing to be no more to you than an epic poem to Coleridge, or a prison and police bill to some of your relations.

SYDNEY SMITH.

131.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

No date.

My dear Friend,

I sent you hasty notice, two or three days ago, that your pretty and elegant drawings had arrived. They are hung up, and give me a ray of cheerfulness and satisfaction whenever I look upon them.

Lord Tankerville is very kind to me, and I am much flattered by his attention. I will write to Mr Bailey on the very interesting subject of venison,—a subject which is deemed amongst the clergy a professional one.

I hardly know *any man* who deserves *any woman;* therefore I shall think —— unequally married if she marries ——. It is a common, every-day sort of match; and she will be occupied, as usual, by the rapid succession of Tom, Peter, Harry, Susan, Daniel, Caroline, Elizabeth, Jemima, Duodecimus, and Tridecimus.

There is a great difference of opinion about Scott's new novel. At Holland House it is much run down; I dare not oppose my opinion to such an assay or proof-house; but it made me cry and laugh very often, and I was very sorry when it was over, and so I cannot in justice call it dull.

The few words I said of Mrs Fry (whom God bless, as well as you!) were these:—

"There is a spectacle which this town now exhibits, that I will venture to call the most solemn, the most Christian, the most affecting, which any human being ever witnessed! To see that holy woman in the midst of wretched prisoners,—to see them calling earnestly upon God, soothed by her voice, animated by her look, clinging to the hem of her garment, and worshipping her as the only human being who has ever loved them, or taught them, or noticed them, or spoken to them of God!—this is the sight which breaks down the pageantry of the world,—which tell us that the short hour of life is passing away, and that we must prepare by some good deeds to meet God; that it is time to give, to pray, to comfort,—to go, like this blessed woman, and do the work of our heavenly Saviour, Jesus, among the guilty, among the broken-hearted, and the sick; and to labour in the deepest and darkest wretchedness of life!" God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

132.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

December 22, 1817.

Dear Lady Grey,

I am afraid you will laugh the flower-garden to scorn; and yet

the living pattern is the prettiest thing of the kind I ever saw. I cannot see why you should disdain formal and regular shapes. In small spaces of ground contiguous to your house, and with the blooming midsummer blaze of flowers, they are surely very pretty. And in this mode were these gardens first brought over to us from Holland and France.

I journeyed on to York with very little *ennui*. As long as the coach is in Northumberland, I think the conversation turns upon the Duke of Northumberland and Lord Grey. A fat lady in the corner was very partial to the latter: a merchant from Newcastle did not like his principles;—"All the Greys are passionate, but it is soon over;" "Sir Harry shot an eagle;" "Lord Grey can spend thirty thousand a year, clear," &c. &c.

I found everybody very well at my home, and various schemes laid for Christmas feasts, in which, as you may suppose, I shall be aiding and abetting. I am very much obliged to you and Lord Grey for your kindness during my stay with you. Amid your lords and dukes, pray keep a bit, however small, in your recollection for me.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Ever, with sincere respect and regard, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

133.] TO JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

January 7, 1818.

My dear Whishaw,

We have been here* for a fortnight, and stay till the 21st. The company who come here are chiefly *philosophical*, as there is an immense colony of that name in these parts; they seem all good-natured, worthy people, and many of them in the Whig line. In these days, too, everybody reads a little; and there is more variety and information in every class than there was fifty years ago. About the year 1740, a manufacturer of long ells or twilled fustians must have been rather a coarse-grained fellow. It is not among gentlemen of that description I would at present look for all that is delightful in manner and conversation, but they certainly run finer than they did, and are (to use their own phrase) a superior article.

The acquittal of Hone gave me sincere pleasure, because I believe it proceeded, in some measure, from the horror and disgust which the *excessive* punishments for libel have excited; and if jurymen take this mode of expressing their disgust, judges will be more moderate. It is a rebuke also upon the very offensive and

* The name of the place is not given in the MS.—ED.

scandalous zeal of ——, and teaches juries their strength and importance. In short, Church and King in moderation are very good things, but we have too much of both. I presume by this time your grief at the death of the Princess is somewhat abated. Death in the midst of youth is always melancholy, but I cannot think it of political importance.

I am very glad the —— have sent their son from home; he is a very unusual boy, and he wanted to be exposed a little more to the open air of the world.

Poor Mackintosh! I am heartily sorry for him; but his situation at Hertford will suit him very well (pelting and contusions always excepted*). He should stipulate for "pebble money," as it is technically termed, or an annual pension in case he is disabled by the pelting of the students. By the by, might it not be advisable for the professors to learn the use of the sling (*balearis habena*)?—it would give them a great advantage over the students.

We are all perfectly well, with the usual January exceptions of colds, sore throats, rheumatism, and hoarseness. I shall be in London in March, but pray write to me before if you have any leisure.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

134.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

February 6, 1818.

My dear Lady Holland,

I cannot be insensible to the loss of so sensible and so agreeable a man as Lord Ossory, and of one so nearly related to Lord Holland; but I know nothing which, for a long time, has made me so truly happy as to hear of your accession of fortune, which I did this day from Lord Carlisle. I gave three loud huzzas in Lord Cawdor's dressing-room; making more noise in a minute than the accumulated sounds in Castle Howard would amount to in a whole year. God send you health and long life, to enjoy it!

SYDNEY SMITH.

135.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, February, 1818.

Dear Lady Mary,

I have, for many weighty reasons, put off my coming to town till

* Alluding to the frequent insurrections that used formerly to take place amongst the students at Haileybury College.

the middle of May; therefore, pray do not destroy yourself with dissipation between this period and that, so that there may remain a small portion of you for your lately-arriving country friends.

I never knew anything more horrible than the death of poor Croft; what misery the poor fellow must have suffered between the Princess's death and his own!

I hope you are as much rejoiced as it behoves all good people to be, at the increase of fortune which has accrued to Lord Holland. Lord Ossory seems to have enjoyed as much happiness as falls to the lot of human beings,—a good fortune, rank, excellent sense and health, a love of knowledge, long life, and equable temper. May all this be your lot!

You said there was a young —— to appear soon; where is it? What do you think of Publicola Pym Hampden Runnymede ——, for a name?

I am losing my life and time in thinking and talking of bulls, cows, horses, and sheep; and, with my time, my money also. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

136.] TO LADY DAVY.

Foston, April 8, 1818.

My dear Lady Davy,

Infinitely gratified, that you, who live in the most intellectual spot of the most intellectual place in the world, should think and ask when a Yorkshire parson comes to town. My Lord, the Thane of Cawdor, is pleased to disport himself sometimes with the country clergy; yet, by the grace of God, they will be equal with him when they come to London.

I am astonished that a woman of your sense should yield to such an imposture as the Augsburg Alps;—surely you have found out, by this time, that God has made nothing so curious as human creatures. Deucalion and Pyrrha acted with more wisdom than Sir Humphry and you; for being in the Augsburg Alps, and meeting with a number of specimens, they tossed them over their heads and turned them into men and women. You, on the contrary, are flinging away your animated beings for quartz and feldspar.

The Hollands wrote with great pleasure of a dinner you gave them: and certainly you do keep *one* of the most agreeable houses, if not *the* most agreeable house, in London. Ali Pasha Luttrell, Prince of the Albanians, allows this.

I am impatient to see you, and am always pleased and flattered when I find the Lethean lemonade of London does not banish me

from your recollections. Mrs Sydney unites with me in kind regards to Sir Humphry.

Ever, dear Lady Davy, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

137.] TO JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

Foston, April 13, 1818.

My dear Whishaw,

I am very much obliged to you for your kind offer; I have however made numerous inquiries, and believe I am tolerably well instructed in the ways of Westminster School. If any of your friends have a son at Westminister, who is a boy of conduct and parts, I should be much obliged to you to recommend Douglas* to his protection; he has never been at school, and the change is greater perhaps than any other he will experience in his future life.

My astonishment was very great at reading Canning's challenge to the anonymous pamphleteer. If it were the first proof of the kind, it would be sufficient to create a general distrust of his sense, prudence, and capacity for action. What sympathy can a wit by profession, a provoker and a discoverer of other men's weaknesses, expect for his literary woes? What does a politician know of his trade, when twenty years have not made him pamphlet-proof? I cannot form a guess who has written a pamphlet that could provoke Canning to such a reply: I should scarcely suppose any producible person; but I have not read it, and am therefore talking at random.

Our excellent friend —— appears to have been somewhat hasty upon the subject of the spy in the one-horse chair, drawn by the warrior; but his conduct was very manly and respectable, in advocating the cause of the poor democrats, who by their knavery and folly are very contemptible, but are not therefore to be abandoned to their oppressors. I have been fighting up against agricultural difficulties, and endeavouring to do well what I am compelled to do; but I believe the first receipt to farm well is, to be rich.

Soon after the 12th of May I hope to see you, and shall be happy to converse with you upon the subject of our poor friend's papers; though the general leaning of my mind is to leave his fame where it now stands, upon its political base.

Hertford College is really a paradox.

Of Hallam's labour and accuracy I have no doubt: I like and

* Mr Smith's eldest son.

respect him as much as you do; his success will please me very much.

I remain, my dear Whishaw, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

138.] TO LADY DAVY.

[Note.] *Holland House.*

. . . . . .

You are of an ardent mind, and overlook the difficulties and embarrassments of life. Luttrell, before I taught him better, imagined muffins grew! He was wholly ignorant of all the intermediate processes of sowing, reaping, grinding, kneading, and baking. Now you require a *prompt* answer; but mark the difficulties: your note comes to Weymouth Street, where I am *not;* then by the post to Holland House, where, as I am not a marquis, and have no servant, it is tossed on the porter's table; and when found and answered, will creep into the post late this evening, if the postman is no more drunk than common.

Pray allow for these distressing embarrassments, with which human intercourse is afflicted; and believe how happy I shall be to wait on you the 22d, being always, my dear Lady Davy, sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

139.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

1818.

My dear Jeffrey,

I am truly obliged by your kindness in inviting Mrs Sydney and me to come and see you. I know nothing that would give us more pleasure; but poverty, agriculture, children, clerical confinement, all conspire to put such a pleasure out of my reach. The only holiday I get in the year carries me naturally towards London, to meet my father and brother; however, I will not despair. I mention these things explicitly now, that there may be no occasion to trouble you any more; and this, I dare say you will agree with me, is the better plan.

I must however beg the favour of you to be explicit on one point. Do you mean to take care that the Review shall not profess or encourage infidel principles? Unless this is the case, I must absolutely give up all thoughts of connecting myself with it.

Is it the custom in the Review to translate French extracts? I believe not.

I have received, and nearly read, Georgel.

Ever, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

140.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, July 16, 1818.

My dear Allen,

I have read Georgel, and must say I have seldom read a more stupid book. The first volume, in which he relates what he had seen and observed himself, is well enough; but the three last are no more than a mere newspaper collection of the proceedings; lamentations over the wickedness of the Revolution, and common parsonic notions of the right of kings. Does the book strike you in any other point of view? Such as it is, I shall write a review of it, and I should be obliged to you to tell me if you think my opinion just.

Is his explanation of the story of the necklace to be credited? Could a man of the Cardinal's rank, who had filled the situation of Ambassador at the Court of Vienna, be the dupe of such a woman as Madame La Motte? or was he the rogue? or was he the dupe? and La Motte the agent of the Queen? If this is not the true version, where is the true version to be found? Is there any new information respecting the French Revolution in Georgel? there seems none such to me. Pray recommend me some new books as soon as you can. Brougham seems to have made a very respectable appearance in point of numbers.

The springs and the fountains are all dried up, and the land and the cattle are drinking ale and porter. But nothing signifies when the Whigs are so successful. Kind regards. Ever yours, dear Allen, most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

141.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

August 1818.

The drawings, dear Lady, are not yet arrived, though I dare say they are on the road. We have one drawing of yours in our drawing-room, and shall be delighted to multiply such ornaments, for their own merit, and for the recollections they excite.

My sermon is on the road, with other heavy baggage. I will read it when it comes; and if what I have said of Mrs Fry is worth extracting, I shall be happy to send it to you: but I am a rough writer of sermons, thinking less care necessary for that which is spoken, than that which is written; or rather, I should say, for that which is written to *be* spoken, than that which is written to be read.

Poor Bobus has, as you see, lost his election; a trick played upon him by that extraordinary person who looks over Lincoln,

and who, looking, saw that he had not his clerical brother with him, and so watched his opportunity to do him a mischief.

I am heartily glad to see the elections take so favourable a turn. The people are all mad; what can they possibly mean by being so wise and so reasonable?

I recommend you to read the first and second volumes of the four volumes of the Abbé Georgel's Memoirs. You will suppose, from this advice, that there is something improper in the third and fourth; but, to spare you the trouble of beginning with them, I assure you I only exclude them from my recommendation because they are dull. You will see, in the second volume, a detailed account of the celebrated Necklace Story, which regaled your papa and mamma before you were born,—an event, by the by, for which I always feel myself much indebted to Lord and Lady Tankerville. God bless you! SYDNEY SMITH.

142.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, August 9, 1818.

My dear Friend,

I will tell you my opinion about Hone and his prosecution, and then you shall do just as you like in allotting the book to, or withholding it from, me.

I think the Administration did perfectly right in prosecuting him; for he either intended to bring the religion of his country into ridicule with the common people, or was blamably careless in not guarding against that consequence; but the punishments of libel are so atrocious and severe, that I almost doubt whether his total acquittal is not better than the establishment of his guilt would have been, followed by that enormous and disproportionate punishment which awaited it. Lord Ellenborough's conduct was very absurd; and it was tyrannical and oppressive to prosecute the man three times. I have the same opinion which everybody else has of the bravery and talent exemplified in his defence; and his trial is rendered memorable by the improved method of striking a jury.

These are the outlines of my opinions on the subject, and I shall most cheerfully acquiesce in your sentence of Yes or No.

I had no idea of writing anything very new upon the subject of the Poor Laws, but something short and readable, which Chalmers has *not* done, for it is not possible to read his dissertation; but there may be some fear of clashing with him, and therefore perhaps I had better avoid the subject. I would not, of course, interfere with any subject you intended to treat.

I will bore you as little with questions about the Review as possible; but do not think it necessary, in writing an answer, when you happen to be busy, to write more than a mere reply to the question.

We are just beginning our harvest here,—a very indifferent one; and water is not to be had for love or money. Ever, my dear Jeffrey, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

143.] TO THE EARL GREY.

York, August 24, 1818.

Dear Lord Grey,

I am very desirous to hear what your vote is about Walter Scott. I think it excellent,—quite as good as any of his novels, excepting that in which Claverhouse is introduced, and of which I forget the name. I read it with the liveliest interest; he repeats his characters, but it seems they will bear repetition. I have heard no votes, but those of Lord and Lady Holland and John Allen against, and Lord and Lady Lansdowne for, the book.

I congratulate you on the general turn of the elections, and the serious accession of strength to the Whigs.

Brougham seems to have made an excellent stand against the Lonsdales: and if Lord Thanet will back him again, he will probably carry his point. The Tories here are by no means satisfied with ——, who is subjected to vacillations between right and wrong. They want a man steadily base, who may be depended upon for want of principle. I think on these points Mr —— might satisfy any reasonable man; but they are exorbitant in their demands.

We conquered here the whooping-cough with a pennyworth of salt of tartar, after having filled them with the expensive poisons of Halford. What an odd thing that such a specific should not be more known!

Adieu, my dear Lord! Ever yours, with sincere attachment and respect,

SYDNEY SMITH.

144.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, August 28, 1818.

My dear Allen,

I have long since despatched my review of Georgel to Jeffrey. It is ten years since there has been any account in the Edinburgh Review of Botany Bay; I have a fancy to give an account of the

progress of the colony since that time; do you know any books to have recourse to? There is a Report of the House of Commons, which must throw some light on the present state of the colony, and there are, above all, if I could get at them, the Botany Bay and Van Diemen's Land newspapers. Do you know Manne's book, 1811? Do you know anything else in any other books capable of throwing light upon the subject?

There is a Mr Stewart in Edinburgh, a Scotch clergyman, who is said to be eminently successful in the cure of phthisis when somewhat advanced; have you heard anything about him, or his practice? Do you believe in the report? Will you write immediately to John Thompson, to know what is his opinion of Stewart and his practice? The anecdotes I have heard are very numerous and very strong.

The harvest is finished here, and is not more than two thirds of an average crop: potatoes have entirely failed; there is no hay; and it will be a year of great scarcity.

I cannot at all agree about Walter Scott; it is a novel full of power and interest; he repeats his characters, but they will bear repetition. Who can read the novel without laughing and crying twenty times? What other proof is needed?

Lord Tankerville has sent me a whole buck; this necessarily takes up a good deal of my time. Lord Carlisle gets stronger and healthier every time I see him. Morpeth has arrived at Castle Howard with the Duke of Rutland.

What matchless impudence, to place the two —— in the frontispiece of the Education Committee!

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

145.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, September 15, 1818.

Dear Allen,

I am exceedingly obliged by your kindness in procuring for me the Botany Bay Gazettes, but I have just received a letter from Longman, saying he shall be able to procure them; as it is better therefore to employ one who has a pecuniary interest in being civil, than a person who has merely a moral interest, I hasten to save trouble to Mr Plumer, who probably after all is taking none; but still, having said he would take trouble, the obligation is the same.

Thompson * is above all jealousy, and therefore phthisis remains as incurable as it always has been; still the day *may* come—*will* come when that complaint will be reduced to utter insignificance

* Dr Thompson of Edinburgh.

by some silly weed on which we now trample every day, not knowing its power to prevent the greatest human afflictions.

I should very much have liked a collection of letters of Madame d'Epinay and her friends, after her return from Geneva, and her friendship established with Diderot. Grimm is an excellent person, not unlike Whishaw, except as he is the object of a tender passion to a beautiful woman.

I question much whether Lady Holland has seen a real country squire, or if they grow at all within that distance of London.

SYDNEY SMITH.

146.] TO THE EARL GREY.

September, 1818.

My dear Lord Grey,

Many thanks for the important information you have sent me, which I have forwarded to ——, whose children, I find, are better: but I hope he will not resume his security. I shall be very much surprised if it turns out that Stewart can stop the progress of ulcers found in the lungs; but the project of hardening the lungs, by hardening their case, seems worth attending to. Most of the viscera can be got at, and improved by topical applications,—liver, stomach, kidneys, &c.

I think I shall be able to make out a journey to the North this year. It will give me a sincere pleasure to come to Howick; I have no doubt of a hearty welcome. The Duchess of Bedford is full of amusement and sense; but I need no other motive to visit Howick than the sincere respect and friendship I entertain for its inhabitants, whose acquaintance I find myself to have made (so human life slips on!) eleven years ago.

We have about two-thirds of a crop in this country, and I have a fine crop of Talavera wheat. The Granvilles are at Castle Howard, and all the Morpeths (no mean part of the population of Yorkshire) fully established there. The old Earl is young, athletic, and merry.

You had better write to the Duke of Norfolk about the seats of our friends Philips and his son, as they will both probably be hanged by the mob in cotton twist.

The Commissioner will have hard work with the Scotch atheists; they are said to be numerous this season, and in great force, from the irregular supply of rain.

I am by no means well this day, so I must leave off writing: I will write to you before I come, and hear from you before I set off.

Ever, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

147.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Foston, October 11, 1818.

My dear Lady Holland,

Allen asked when Douglas and I come to the South; but I had no thoughts of coming, and Douglas has been at Westminster some time, fought his first battle, come off victorious, and is completely established. Instead of the south, I am turning my face northwards, to see Lord Grey and Jeffrey. John Murray and I are to meet at the best of all possible châteaux.

Some surprise is excited by your staying at Ampthill; but Rogers, I hear, has been sent for as a condiment, and Luttrell has been also in your epergne.

I am sorry we cannot agree about Walter Scott. My test of a book written to amuse, is amusement; but I am rather rash, and ought not to say *I am amused*, before I have inquired whether Sharp or Mackintosh is so. Whishaw's plan is the best: he gives no opinion for the first week, but confines himself to chuckling and elevating his chin; in the meantime he drives diligently about the first critical stations, breakfasts in Mark Lane, hears from Hertford College, and by Saturday night is as bold as a lion, and as decisive as a court of justice.

The —— are gone to ——, and superfine work there will be, and much whispering; so that a blind man should sit there, and believe they are all gone to bed, though the room is full of the most brilliant company! As for me, I like a little noise and nature, and a large party, very merry and happy. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

148.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, October 23, 1818.

My dear Lord Grey,

Douglas is a great deal better, and if he has no relapse will do well. Mrs Sydney is in town nursing him by this time, though I have not yet heard accounts of her arrival. I am on guard here, with three children of my own and one of my neighbour's, in whose house (guided always by the most rigid rules of vaccination and Jenner) the natural small-pox has broken out, but without death or ugliness.

I am heartily sorry not to make out my visit to Howick. It is not impossible, but very improbable.

I have had a letter to-day from Lady Holland. The air of North Wiltshire is too keen for Henry. It is difficult to suit him with a

climate. We have, to be sure, very little variety of that article in England to choose from, and what there is, cannot be called extra or superfine; yet I should not like to be near Marsh at the first intimation that Lady Holland is displeased with *his* climate. But pray do not repeat these profane jokes, or I shall see Antonio with the bowstring, or John Allen with a few grains of homicide powder in a tea-cup.

The Ministry, I hear, mean to refuse the renewal of the Committee. Mr —— has been at Lord Carlisle's; I should like very much to have seen him. A good deal depends upon what figure a husband cuts in a room. Much may be conceded to income and local position, but not all. I could have told in a moment whether he would, or would not pass, but I did not see him. Lady Georgiana was for him, so was Lord Morpeth. I have written you a long letter, intending only to write three lines; but garrulity with tongue and pen is my misfortune, and, this evening, yours also.

Always, my dear Lord, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

149.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, October 29, 1818.

My dear Lord,

You will be so obliging as to write me word when your schemes are fixed. My present plan is to be in London for three or four months, about the 10th of December. I am truly sorry to receive such accounts of Lady Grey. It strikes me that she has a very good constitution, and I have no doubt we shall have a very merry christening in Portman Square, to which, I strongly suspect, you will invite me; and if Lady Grey (to whom my very kind regards) wishes to see a child gracefully held, and to receive proper compliments upon its beauty, and to witness the consummation of all ecclesiastical observances, she will invite me to perform the ceremony.

Jeffrey, to whom I was going when I left you, is very ill, at Glasgow, in the hands of surgeons.

Douglas I am quite at my ease about; many thanks for your kind anxiety. I have not read the Memoirs you allude to: your account of them makes me curious.

Ever, dear Lord Grey, yours very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

150.][1] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 23, 1818.

My dear Jeffrey,

I entirely agree with you respecting the Americans, and believe that I am to the full as much a Philoyankeeist as you are. I doubt if there ever was an instance of a new people conducting their affairs with so much wisdom, or if ever there was such an extensive scene of human happiness and prosperity. However, you could not know that such were my opinions; or if you did, you might imagine I should sacrifice them to effect; and in either case your caution was proper,

I go to London the 15th of December, and will send you "America" before then. I certainly will make you a visit at Edinburgh; and remain ever, my dear Jeffrey, most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

151.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, Nov. 30, 1818.

Dear Lord Grey,

I will send Lady Grey the news from London when I get there. I am sure she is too wise a woman not to be fond of gossiping; I am fond of it, and have some talents for it.

I recommend you to read Hall, Palmer, Fearon, and Bradling's Travels in America, particularly Fearon; these four books may, with ease, be read through between breakfast and dinner. There is nothing so curious and interesting as the rapidity with which the Americans are spreading themselves over that immense continent.

It is quite contrary to all probability that America should remain in an integral state. They aim at extending from sea to sea, and have already made settlements on the Pacific. There can be no community of interest between people placed under such very different circumstances: the maritime Americans, and those who communicate with Europe by the Mississippi, are at this moment, as far as interest can divide men, two separate people. There does not appear to be in America at this moment one man of any considerable talents. They are a very sensible people; and seem to have conducted their affairs, upon the whole, very well. Birkbeck's second book is not so good as his first. He deceives himself,—says he *wishes* to deceive himself,—and is not candid. If a man chooses to say, "I will live up to my neck in mud, fight bears, swim rivers, and combat backwoodsmen, that I may ultimately gain an independence for myself and children," this is plain and intelligible; but,

by Birkbeck's account, it is much like settling at Putney or Kew; only the people are more liberal and enlightened. Their economy and their cheap government will do some good in this country by way of example. Their allowance to Munro is £5000 per annum; and he finds his own victuals, fire, and candles!

Ever yours, dear Lord Grey, most sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

152.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

January 12, 1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

Do you know any sensible, agreeable person of the name of Allen, a bachelor and a layman? There is likely to be a vacancy soon in Dulwich College, and no such person as I have described can be found.

I have no shyness with strangers, and care not where and with whom I dine. To-day I dined with Sir Henry Torrens, the Duke of York's secretary, and found him a very gentleman-like, civilised man, with what would pass in the army for a good understanding. I was very well pleased with all I saw, for he has six elegant, pretty children, and a very comfortable villa at Fulham; his rooms were well lighted, warmed in the most agreeable, luxurious manner with Russian stoves, and his dinner excellent. Everything was perfectly comfortable. What is the use of fish or venison, when the backbone is six degrees below the freezing-point? Of all miserable habitations, an English house, either in very hot or very cold weather, is the worst.

My little boy, whom you were so good as to inquire about, is quite well, and returned to Westminster. He has fought two or three battles successfully, and is at the head of his class.

I hope Lord Grey liked Burdett's letter to Cobbett. It is excellent, and will do that consummate villain some mischief; he is still a good deal read.

I passed four hours yesterday with my children in the British Museum: it is now put on the best possible footing, and exhibited courteously and publicly to all. The visitors when I was there were principally maid-servants. Fifty thousand people saw it last year. My kindest regards, if you please, to my young friends, and to the excellent Lord of Howick.

Ever, my dear Lady Grey, yours most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

I am going to Bath next week, to see my father, aged eighty.

153.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

Macdonald spoke extremely well, and to the entire satisfaction of all his friends. Sir Robert Wilson was a complete failure: he could lead an army in or out of a defile, but cannot speak. Mr L——, the jocular Yorkshire member, is supposed to be the most consummately impudent man that ever passed the Humber. Waithman, the linendraper, spoke very well, and with great propriety; he has been an improved man ever since Lord Grey gave him such a beating. Mr Ellis, son of Lord Mendip, appears upon the London arena;—politics unknown; a very gentleman-like, sensible young man, but, I fear, a Tory.

I met Lady C—— L—— last night, the first time I have seen her since *the book*: a very cold manner on my part. Four sides of paper the next morning from her, and a plain and vigorous chastisement from me; but not uncivil. I am a great man for mercy; and I told her, if she would conduct herself with prudence and common sense, her conduct would in time be forgotten.

We had a large party at the Berrys' last night; very agreeable, and everybody there.

Antonio is married to one of the under cook-maids, which makes the French cook very angry, as an interference with his department and perquisites. They report that Pidcock of the Exeter Change, is to take Antonio.

Tierney (not, as you know, inclined to be sanguine) is in very good spirits, and expects great divisions.

Tell my Lord, if he wants to read a good savoury ecclesiastical pamphlet, to read Jonas Dennis's "Concio Cleri," a book of about one hundred and fifty pages; he is the first parson who has caught scent of the Roman Catholic Bill, passed at the end of the last Parliament; and no she-bear robbed of her whelps can be more furious.

A new actor has appeared, a Mr Farren, an Irishman; very much admired. I have not heard him, for I never go to plays, and should not care (except for the amusement of others) if there was no theatre in the whole world; it is an art intended only for amusement, and it never amuses me. We are very gay here, and S—— takes it kindly and is not afraid.

SYDNEY SMITH.

154.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Holland House. No date.

Dear Lady Grey,

I write from Holland House, where all are very well, except Charles, who is returned with a fit of the jaundice; but it is not of any consequence. I scarcely ever saw a more pleasing, engaging, natural young man.

I am truly glad to hear you are in good spirits. I believe, when any serious good quality or wise exertion is required of you, you will rummage about, and come out with it at last.

We had a large party at dinner here yesterday:—Dr Wollaston, the great philosopher, who did not say one word; William Lamb; Sir Henry Bunbury; Palmella, the Portuguese Ambassador; Lord Aberdeen; the Exquisite; Sir William Grant, a rake and disorderly man of the town, recently Master of the Rolls; Whishaw, a man of fashion; Frere; Hallam, of the "Middle Ages;" and myself. In spite of such heterogeneous materials, we had a pleasant party. Mary is becoming very handsome.

Sir Henry Halford told me that the Queen's property was estimated at £150,000, including jewels of every description. The £28,000 of jewels she received from the King at her marriage, she has given back to him.

It is reported that the Chancellor wishes to retire, if a successor could be found to exclude Leach, whom he hates. The seals are said to have been offered to, and refused by, Sir William Grant; and the Irish Chancellor is talked of. Lord —— is suspected to have written some verses himself. He went out a calculator, and is returned a child of Nature, and probably a lyric bard.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

S. S.

155.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

20 *Saville Row, Feb.* 5, 1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

Tierney made a very good speech, very well calculated to get votes. Frankland Lewis did very well. Mr Maberley introduced some very striking arguments, but got wrong toward the end. This is the Augustan age of aldermen. Alderman Heygate has far exceeded Waithman, who spoke very well.

Nothing will, I believe, be said, by way of eulogium, upon Romilly and Elliott; a foolish, parading practice, very properly put an end to.

When you come to town again, pray see the new Custom-House. The attractive objects in it are the long room, one of the finest I ever saw in my life; and the façade, towards the river. I have also seen, this day, the Mint, which I think would please you. Lord Grey's Miss O'Neil is accused of ranting.

Antonio at last ran away and offered himself to Lady C—— L——. She has taken two days to consider of it.

Lord Grey will like that article in the Edinburgh Review upon "Universal Suffrage:" it is by Sir James Mackintosh. There is a pamphlet on Bullion, by Mr Copplestone, of Oxford, much read; but bullion, I think, is not a favourite dish at Howick.

SYDNEY SMITH.

156.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Saville Row, Feb. 19, 1819.

My dear Lord Grey,

I am heartily glad that it has all ended so well, and that Lady Grey's misery and your anxiety are at an end; and I do assure you, it has diffused a universal joy among your friends here. Pray say everything that is kind from me to Lady Grey.

I was on the hustings the greater part of the morning yesterday, with the Miss Berrys and Lady Charlotte Lindsay. Hobhouse has some talent for addressing the mob. They would not hear Lamb nor Hunt. Lamb's election is considered as safe.

Lauderdale is better to-day. I cannot make out what the attack has been, but I suspect, to speak the plain truth, apoplectic. His memory was almost entirely gone from about one o'clock to six; in the course of the evening he completely recovered it, and is now getting rapidly well. In future he must be more idle, and think less of bullion and the country; with these precautions, he has a good many years before him.

It is generally thought that Government would have been beaten last night, if letters had been sent on the side of Opposition, as they were on the other side.

You must read Cobbett's Grammar; it is said to be exceedingly good. I went yesterday to see the Penitentiary: it is a very great national work, and well worth your seeing; and tell Lady Grey, when she comes to town, to walk on that very fine terrace between Vauxhall and Westminster Bridge. It is one of the finest things about London.

I agree with you in all you say about the democrats; they are as much to be kept at bay with the left hand, as the Tories are with the right. Ever yours, very sincerely, dear Lord Grey,

SYDNEY SMITH.

157.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

It is now generally thought that the Chancellor will stay in. The Chancellor of Ireland would not take the office if offered to him. If Lord Eldon does give up, Baron Richards is thought to be his most probable successor.

When Lord Erskine was ill at Oatlands,* Mr Dawson dressed himself up as the new Lady Erskine, and sent up word that she wished to see the Duchess. Lord Lauderdale, who was with her, came out to prevent the intrusion of the new peeress; who kicked, screamed, and scratched, and vowed she would come in. At last, Lauderdale took her up in his arms, and was going to carry her down-stairs; but Lord Alvanley pretending to assist Lauderdale, opened the door. Lady Erskine extricated herself from the Scotch Hercules, and, with torn veil and dishevelled hair, flung herself at the Duchess's feet! Lauderdale stamped about like one mad, expecting every moment the Duchess would go into hysterics. The scene was put an end to by a universal roar of laughter from everybody in the room; and the astonished Lauderdale beheld the peeress kicking off her petticoats, and collapsing into a well-known dandy! In the meanwhile, poor Lord Erskine lies miserably ill; and if he does not die from the illness, will probably die from the effects of it.

The Hollands have read Rogers's poem, and like it. The verses on Pæstum are said to be beautiful. The whole poem is not more than eight hundred lines. Luttrell approves: I have not see it yet.

I went yesterday to see the national monuments in St Paul's, and never beheld such a disgusting heap of trash. It is a disgrace to a country to encourage such artists. Samuel Johnson's monument, by old Bacon, is an exception. I have seen to-day, at the Prince's Riding-House, the casts from the Florence Gallery, of Niobe and her Children, arranged by Cockerell's son upon a new theory. They give me very great pleasure; pray see them when you come to town. Afterwards I went over Carlton House, with Nash, the architect. The suite of golden rooms, 450 feet in length, is extremely magnificent; still, not good enough for a palace.

Brougham, I think, does not look well. He has been too busily engaged. If he would stint himself to doing twice as much as two of the most active men in London, it would do very well.

We talked at Holland House to-night of good reading, and it was voted that Charles Earl Grey was one of the best readers in England.

* The Duke of York's house, near Walton.

Lord Holland proposed the motion, and I seconded it. But it is one o'clock in the morning, and I must go to bed.

Ever, dear Lady Grey, yours very affectionately and sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

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158. TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1819.

Dear Lady Grey,

Opposition seems to [illegible] stronger and stronger every day. The most sanguine think the Ministry will be beaten; the least so, that Vansittart and the Doctor will be thrown overboard.

I have read Rogers; there are some very good descriptions,—the Mother and Child, Mr Fox at St Ann's Hill, and several more. The beginning of the verses on Pæstum are very good too. I am going to dine with the Miss Berrys to-day, where I am in high favour, and am reckoned a wit.

Very bad accounts of Lord Erskine,—very ill and languid from the attack, though out of danger.

I am glad to hear from Sir Charles Monck that rents begin to be paid again in Northumberland; I thought the practice had been lost altogether.

SYDNEY SMITH.

159.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, April 2, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

In talking of subjects, why should I not take up that of Tithes? It is untouched in our Review, and of general English interest. My doctrines upon it are, that they should be commuted for corn payments; but I will undertake to make a good article upon it and a liberal one.

It pleases me sometimes to think of the very great number of important subjects which have been discussed in so enlightened a manner in the Edinburgh Review. It is a sort of magazine of liberal sentiments, which I hope will be read by the rising generation, and infuse into them a proper contempt for their parents' stupid and unphilosophical prejudices.

We have all been making a long stay in London, and succeeded very well there.

You see this spirited House of Commons knows how to demean itself when any solid act of baseness, such as the ten thousand pounds to the Duke of York, is in agitation. Scarlett has made a very great character as a speaker. Mackintosh made a prodigious

speech on the reform of the criminal law. I wish you would come into Parliament and outdo them both, as I verily believe you would. God bless you, dear Jeffrey!

SYDNEY SMITH.

160.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, May 17, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

I wrote to you some time since, proposing for myself an article upon Tithes, to which you immediately consented. I learn from Brougham (through Allen however) that he had, above a twelvemonth since, with your consent, engaged this subject. Is this so? If it is, would it not be better to keep some memorandum of these sort of engagements?—(excuse the impertinence of the suggestion.) If it is *not* so, I will proceed. In the meantime, I will proceed upon an article of Mr Dennis and the Church, and I have finished a short article of Heude's "Travels across the Desert from Bagdad to Constantinople." I shall proceed with such sort of books till some interesting subject occurs to me of greater importance. I have already your consent to Mr Dennis..

Poor Seymour!* Every year thins the ranks of our old friends. Those who remain must take closer order.

I have read no article but Ross, which I like, and Laney, which I do not dislike, though I think it might have been more entertaining.

What a singular Parliament this is! It all proceeds from paying when they are not frightened. The severe scrutiny into evaded taxes has thickened the ranks of Opposition.

I long to see you, but locomotion becomes every year more difficult, because I get poorer and poorer as my family grows up. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

161.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Saville Row, June, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

This number of the Review is much liked, in spite of the nonsense I have contributed: particularly, I think, Mackintosh's paper on Universal Suffrage.

The Opposition expect to muster strong. Tierney, who is always the reverse of sanguine, talks of one hundred and eighty or two hundred.

* Lord Webb Seymour, brother to the Duke of Somerset.

Rogers's poem is just out. The Hollands speak very highly of it. Crabbe is coming out with a poem of twelve thousand lines, for which, and the copy of his other works, Murray is to give him three thousand pounds; a sum which Crabbe has heard mentioned before, but of which he can form no very accurate numerical notion. All sums beyond a hundred pounds must be to him mere indistinct vision—clouds and darkness.

Lord Byron's satires, brought over by Lord Lauderdale, are sent back for mitigation down to the standard law level. Murray is afraid of his ears. Lord John Russell is coming out with the Memoirs of Lord Russell, and Miss Berry with those of Lady Russell.

Ever, my dear friend, yours most truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

162.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, July 7, 1819.

Dear Allen,

I have never a cold in winter, by any accident or any carelessness; in summer, no attention can preserve me from them; and they come upon me with a violence which is extremely distressing: no determination to the lungs, no cough, merely catarrh, but catarrh which prevents me from hearing, seeing, smelling, or speaking for weeks together, indeed all the summer; and this has been the case for many years. Can you do me any good?

Can you give me any subject, or tell me any book, for the Review? I have sent a long article upon Botany Bay.

Pray tell me how Lord Holland is, and how my brother is. My eldest son, Douglas (whom you may remember at Holland House), has succeeded in the trial at Westminster, and Hall * has promised to remember him in the election to Christchurch. This is very well if he does not succeed in the attempt to go to the West Indies,—a much more certain road to independence than any he is likely to get into in this country; but Baring, in the immensity of his transactions, is hardly likely to keep in mind anything so unimportant.

What are your plans for the summer?

I have read Galiani's letters, but they are so utterly insignificant, that there is nothing more to be said of them than that they are not worth speaking about. I scarcely ever read a more insignificant collection of letters. He wrote a little tract in the beginning of life about the importation of corn; and the recollection of that

* Dean of Christchurch, Oxford.

is the subject of the letters, for twenty years, to Madame D'Épinay; or, if there is any variation, of his trumpery commissions to the good-natured woman.

"Lettres à l'auteur d'un ouvrage ayant pour titre, Superstitions et Prestiges des Philosophes du 18 siècle, dans lequel on examine plusieurs opinions qui mettent obstacle à l'entier établissement de la Religion en France; par M. Deleuse, 8vo." Do you know anything of this book?—and of "Campagne de l'Armée Française en Portugal, 1810–11; avec un précis de celles qui l'ont précédé; par un Officier supérieur employé dans l'état-major de cette armée"?

Yours, my dear Allen, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

163.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, July 30, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

I hear you are going to Brougham's. I should like most exceedingly to meet you there, but it is hardly possible. Poor Playfair!

You have never told me how your little girl is.

What do you think will become of all these political agitations? I am strongly inclined to think, whether now or twenty years hence, that Parliament *must* be reformed. The case that the people have is too strong to be resisted; an answer may be made to it, which will satisfy enlightened people perhaps, but none that the mass will be satisfied with. I am doubtful whether it is not *your* duty and *my* duty to become moderate Reformers, to keep off worse.

We are upon the eve here of a good harvest, and I have just finished twenty acres of hay. I am far gone in agriculture. God bless you, my dear friend!

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

164.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, August 7, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

You must consider that Edinburgh is a very grave place, and that you live with philosophers who are very intolerant of nonsense. I write for the London, not for the Scotch market, and perhaps more people read my nonsense than your sense. The complaint was

loud and universal of the extreme dulness and lengthiness of the Edinburgh Review. Too much, I admit, would not do of my style; but the proportion in which it exists enlivens the Review, if you appeal to the whole public, and not to the eight or ten grave Scotchmen with whom you live. I am a very ignorant, frivolous, half-inch person; but, such as I am, I am sure I have done your Review good, and contributed to bring it into notice. Such as I am, I shall be, and cannot promise to alter. Such is my opinion of the effect of my articles. I differ with you entirely about Lieutenant Heude. To do such things very often would be absurd; to punish a man every now and then for writing a frivolous book is wise and proper; and you would find, if you lived in England, that the review of Lieutenant Heude is talked of and quoted for its fun and impertinence, when graver and abler articles are thumbed over and passed by. Almost any one of the sensible men who write for the Review would have written a much wiser and more profound article than I have done upon the Game Laws. I am quite certain nobody would obtain more readers for his essay upon such a subject; and I am equally certain that the principles are *right*, and that there is no lack of sense in it.

So I judge myself; but, after all, the practical appeal is to you. If you think my assistance of no value, I am too just a man to be angry with you upon that account; but while I write, I must write in my own way, All that I meant to do with Lord Selkirk's case was to state it.

I am extremely sorry for Moore's misfortune, but only know generally that he has met with misfortune. God bless you!

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

165.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, August, 1819.

My dear Lady Grey,

I was just going to write to you or Lord Grey, to make inquiries about you;—first, because I had not heard of you for a long time; next, because somebody told me you were at Malvern, and I wanted an explanation of the proceeding. I am very sorry to find it explained as you have explained it. God send your object may be answered in going there!

I am very fond of Malvern; the double view from the top of the hill is one of the finest things I know. My father some years had a house some four miles from Malvern,—Broomsbery, Mr Yates's; so I know all the country perfectly well.

I was extremely sorry to miss you and Lord Grey in London,

but you rose above the horizon just as I sank. You are both wise, prudent, and good, so I suppose you have done right in giving up your house; but I sincerely regret any change that lessens my chance of seeing you. I smiled when I came to that part of your letter where you state that Charles Earl Grey is thoroughly *ennuyed* with Malvern. I can *thoroughly* understand the effect which such a place would have upon him; I am sorry I am not near, to quiz and attack him.

I wish you and Lord Grey would pay us a visit, and see how happy people can be in a small, snug parsonage. I am a great farmer;—am improving, and losing less money than formerly. The crops are abundant everywhere, and, as we are free from manufactures, there are no complaints. The state of the clothing counties of the North (unless the cessation of the demand be temporary) will become truly alarming.

SYDNEY SMITH

166.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, August 16, 1819.

My dear Jeffrey,

Many thanks for your wise and gentlemanlike letter. Perhaps I was a little perverse. I will promise to rebel no more, but attend to your fatherly admonition, taking it as a proof that you confide in the sincere friendship and affection I bear towards you; and I am *sure* you have no friend in the world who loves you better than I do.

You do me honour when you say the subjects I undertake should be important; but, to omit any other difficulty, there is a difficulty in finding such subjects. If you can suggest any to me, I shall be obliged. I mention more books than I shall review, because many on inspection prove unworthy. I should like to write a short article on the Poor Laws. If trade does not increase, there will be a war of the rich against the poor. In that case, you and I I am afraid, shall be of different sides.

SYDNEY SMITH.

I hope the Manchester riots will appear next number; I am ready for them, if nobody else is.

167.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Nov. 3, 1819.

I am truly concerned, my dear Lady Grey, to hear Lord Grey

has been so ill; and I thank you sincerely for the confidence you show in my attachment to him, by informing me of it. For himself, it would be far better if he could remain quietly in the country, but the times will not admit of it; so do you inculcate prudence in what concerns the body, and he will go with the good wishes of all honest men.

I think if I were to talk over the matter with Lord Grey, I should hardly differ with him upon any one point; certainly not upon the enormity of the outrage at Manchester, upon the necessity of county meetings, upon the reprehensible conduct of Ministers in approving of the proceedings of the magistrates, and upon the folly and iniquity of dismissing Lord Fitzwilliam.

I cannot measure the danger; I *guess* there is no more danger at present than what vigilance and activity, without any new and extraordinary coercion, may guard against. With a failing revenue, depressed commerce, manufactures, and industry, and with an Administration determined to concede nothing, there may be hereafter a struggle. If there be, it will not end in democracy, but in despotism. In which of these two evils it terminates, is of no more consequence than from which tube of a double-barrelled pistol I meet my destruction.

Yours, dear Lady Grey, with affection and respect,

SYDNEY SMITH.

168.] TO DOUGLAS SMITH, ESQ.,

King's Scholar at Westminster College.

Foston Rectory, 1819.

My dear Douglas,

Concerning this Mr ——, I would not have you put any trust in him, for he is not trustworthy; but so live with him as if one day or other he were to be your enemy. With such a character as his, this is a necessary precaution.

In the time you can give to English reading you should consider what it is most needful to have, what it is most shameful to want,—shirts and stockings before frills and collars. Such is the history of your own country, to be studied in Hume, then in Rapin's History of England, with Tindal's Continuation. Hume takes you to the end of James the Second, Rapin and Tindal will carry you to the end of Anne. Then, Coxe's "Life of Sir Robert Walpole," and the "Duke of Marlborough;" and these read with attention to dates and geography. Then, the history of the other three or four enlightened nations in Europe. For the English poets, I will let you off at present with Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Shakspeare;

and remember, always in books keep the best company. Don't read a line of Ovid, till you have mastered Virgil; nor a line of Thomson, till you have exhausted Pope; nor of Massinger, till you are familiar with Shakspeare.

I am glad you liked your box and its contents. Think of us as we think of you; and send us the most acceptable of all presents,—the information that you are improving in all particulars.

The greatest of all human mysteries are the Westminster holidays. If you can get a peep behind the curtain, pray let us know immediately the day of your coming home.

We have had about three or four ounces of rain here, that is all. I heard of your being wet through in London, and envied you very much. The whole of this parish is pulverised from long and excessive drought. Our whole property depends upon the tranquillity of the winds: if it blow before it rains, we shall all be up in the air in the shape of dust, and shall be *transparished* we know not where. God bless you, my dear boy! I hope we shall soon meet at Lydiard.

Your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

169.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, York, Dec. 3, 1819.

My dear Lord Grey,

I am truly concerned to see you (in the papers) talking of your health, as you are reported to have done. God grant you may be more deceived in that, than you are in the state of the country! Pray tell me how you are, when you can find leisure to do so.

I entirely agree with you that force alone, without some attempts at conciliation, will not do. Readers are fourfold in number, compared with what they were before the beginning of the French war; and demagogues will, of course, address to them every species of disaffection. As the violence of restraint increases, there will be private presses, as there are private stills. Juries will acquit, being themselves Jacobins. It is possible for able men to do a great deal of mischief in libels, which it is extremely difficult to punish as libels; and the worst of it all is, that a considerable portion of what these rascals say, is so very true. Their remedies are worse than the evils; but when they state to the people how they are bought and sold, and the abuses entailed upon the country by so corrupted a Parliament, it is not easy to answer them, or to hang them.

What I want to see the State do, is to listen in these sad times to some of its numerous enemies. Why not do something for the Catholics, and scratch them off the list? Then come the Protestant

Dissenters. Then, of measures,—a mitigation of the game-laws—commutation of tithes—granting to such towns as Birmingham and Manchester the seats in Parliament taken from the rottenness of Cornwall—revision of the Penal Code—sale of the Crown lands—sacrifice of the Droits of Admiralty against a new war; anything that would show the Government to the people in some other attitude than that of taxing, punishing, and restraining. I believe what Tierney said to be strictly true, that the House of Commons is falling into contempt with the people. Democracy has many more friends among tradesmen and persons of that class of life than is known or supposed commonly. I believe the feeling is most rapidly increasing; and that Parliament, in two or three years' time, will meet under much greater circumstances of terror than those under which it is at present assembled.

From these speculations I slide, by a gentle transition, to Lady Grey: how is she? how is Lord Howick? Are you at your ease about the young man? If ever you will send him, or any of your sons, upon a visit to me, it will give me great pleasure to see them. They shall hear no Tory sentiments, and Howick will appear to be the centre of gaiety and animation compared to Foston. I am delighted with the part Lord Lansdowne has taken: he seems to have made a most admirable speech; but, after all, I believe we shall go *ad veteris Nicolai tristia regna, Pitt ubi combustum Dundasque videbimus omnes.* Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

170.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Saville Row, December, (supposed to be) 1819.

My dear Lady Mary,

I was much amused with your thinking that you had discovered me in the Edinburgh Review; if you look at it again, you will find reason to alter your opinion.

I have brought all my children up to town; and they are, as you may suppose, not a little entertained and delighted. It is the first time they have ever seen four people together, except on remarkably fine days at the parish church. There seems to be nobody in town, nor will there be, I presume, before the meeting of Parliament.

I am writing to you at two o'clock in the morning, having heard of a clergyman who brought himself down from twenty-six to sixteen stone in six months, by lessening his sleep. When he began, he was so fat that he could not walk, and now he walks every day up one of the highest hills in the country, and remains in perfect

health. I shall be so thin when you see me, that you may trundle me about like a mop. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

171.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Foston, York, Jan. 3, 1820.

My dear Davenport,

I sincerely hope your clerical friend will publish his statement; at the same time, it must not be dissembled that a true and candid narrative of what he saw, would for ever put an end to his chance of preferment. My opinion is the same as yours upon the Peterloo business. I have no doubt everything would have ended at Manchester as it did at Leeds, had there been the same forbearance on the part of the magistrates. Either they lost (no great loss) their heads, or the devils of local spite and malice had entered into them, or the nostrils of the clerical magistrates smelt preferment and Court favour; but let it have been what it will, the effects have been most deplorable.

I do not know who Morier is, unless he writes about Persia; my acquaintance is principally confined to sheep and oxen.

Have you read "Ivanhoe"? It is the least dull, and the most easily read through, of all Scott's novels; but there are many more powerful. The subject, in novels, poems, and pictures, is half the battle. The representation of our ancient manners is a fortunate one, and ample enough for three or four more novels.

There are four or five hundred thousand readers more than there were thirty years ago, among the lower orders. A market is open to the democrat writers, by which they gain money and distinction. Government cannot prevent the commerce. A man, if he know his business as a libeller, can write enough for mischief, without writing enough for the Attorney-General. The attack upon the present order of things will go on; and, unfortunately, the gentlemen of the people have a strong case against the House of Commons and the boroughmongers, as they call them. I think all wise men should begin to turn their faces reform-wards. We shall do it better than Mr Hunt or Mr Cobbett. Done it *must* and *will* be.

Mrs Sydney sends her kind regards; in revenge, I beg to be remembered to your family, and remain, dear Davenport, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

172.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Foston, Jan. 24, 1820.

Dear Lord Grey,

If you want to read an agreeable book, read Golownin's narrative of his confinement in, and escape from, Japan; and I think it may do very well for reading out, which I believe is your practice—a practice which I approve rather than follow, and neglect it from mere want of virtue. I think also you may read De Foe's "Life of Colonel Jack,"—entertaining enough when his hero is a scoundrel, but waxing dull as it gets moral. I never set you any difficult tasks in reading, but am as indulgent to you as I am to myself.

I saw Mr —— the other night for the first time.

I am decidedly of opinion that he is like other people. My neighbour, Lord Carlisle, gets younger and younger. I am heartily rejoiced at Mrs Wilmot's marriage; but where will Lord Dacre pass his evenings now? Nothing could be more generous and disinterested on his part than to relinquish so pleasing a society. If this is not devotion, what is?

There are no appearances here of reviving trade; though many of declining agriculture. If the manufacturing misery continues, there will be a reaction of the Radicals. Assassinations and secret swearings *à l'Irlandaise*, or something as bad,—marking an angry and suffering people struggling against restrictions. My curiosity is very much excited by Lord John's motion. Lord Castlereagh's assent to it must have surprised you, for I think his assent includes everything that is important; that a disfranchised borough may be taken out of the surrounding Hundred, and conferred elsewhere; or rather, that it need not necessarily be thrown into the surrounding Hundred.

I hope Lady Grey and all your children are well, and that you are improved in health, so as to have passed your Christmas merrily in the midst of your family. You have naturally a genius for good eating and drinking,—as I have often witnessed, and mean to witness again.

We have all been ill; I attended two of my children through a good stout fever of the typhus kind without ever calling in an apothecary but for one day. I depended upon blessed antimony, and watched anxiously for the time of giving bark. They are both now perfectly well. Pray remember me very kindly to dear Lady Grey; and believe me, my dear Lord, with sincere respect and attachment, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

173.] TO E. DAVENPORT, ESQ.

January 29, 1820.

Dear Davenport,

I think (but that *thinking* is mere conjecture) that you will be time enough for this number if your packet goes off in a fortnight after receiving this note; perhaps in a month, but the sooner the better. The publication of the Review is not punctual, but depends upon the kindness of Minerva in many parts of the island.

Nobody of whom I know so little, and to whose accuracy and fairness I would rather trust, than to those of Mr Stanley.* Mr T—— I do not know. Could you not procure some facts respecting the state of the late Incumbent at Rochdale at the Massacre of Peterloo?

The thing wanted for the lady in question will be the sober, domestic virtues of laying eggs and hatching them. The nest will be cotton,—and a very pleasant nest it is. I wish you were a Yorkshire squire keeping a large house of call in the pleasantest part of the North Riding.

Ever yours sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Best compliments to Miss Davenport, who, if she keep a list of her conquests, will be so good as to put me down in the clergyman's leaf.

174.] TO MISS BERRY.

Foston, Feb. 27, 1820.

I thank you very much for the entertainment I have received from your book. I should however have been afraid to marry such a woman as Lady Rachel; it would have been too awful. There are pieces of china very fine and beautiful, but never intended for daily use. . . .

I have hardly slept out of Foston since I saw you. God send I may be still an animal, and not a vegetable! but I am a little uneasy at this season for sprouting and rural increase, for fear I should have undergone the metamorphose so common in country livings. I shall go to town about the end of March; it will be completely empty, and the dregs that remain will be entirely occupied about hustings and returning-officers.

Commerce and manufactures are still in a frightful state of stagnation.

* Afterwards Bishop of Norwich.

No foreign barks in British ports are seen,
Stuff'd to the water's edge with velveteen,
Or bursting with big bales of bombazine;
No distant climes demand our corduroy,
Unmatch'd habiliment for man and boy;
No fleets of fustian quit the British shore;
The cloth-creating engines cease to roar,
Still is that loom which breech'd the world before.

I am very sorry for the little fat Duke de Berri, but infinitely more so for the dismissal of Decazes,—a fatal measure.

I must not die without seeing Paris. Figure to yourself what a horrid death,—to die without seeing Paris! I think I could make something of this in a tragedy, so as to draw tears from Donna Agnes and yourself. Where are you going to? When do you return? Why do you go at all? Is Paris more agreeable than London?

We have had a little plot here in a hay-loft. God forbid anybody should be murdered! but, if I were to turn assassin, it should not be of five or six Ministers, who are placed where they are by the folly of the country gentlemen, but of the hundred thousand squires, to whose stupidity and folly such an Administration owes its existence.

Ever your friend,
SYDNEY SMITH.

175.] TO THE EARL GREY.

Saville Row, April 15, 1820.

Dear Lord Grey,

People—that is, Whig people—are very much out of humour about Lord Morpeth. Lord Morpeth bears it magnanimously; and, I really believe, is glad he has left Parliament, though he does not like the mode. Lord Holland is very well; Lady Holland I have not yet seen. I have seen Lady Grey, the General, and Mrs Grey. Brougham attends frequently at the Treasury, upon the Queen's business.

The King sits all day long with Lady C——, sketching processions and looking at jewels: in the meantime, she tells everywhere all that he tells to her. It is expected Burdett will have two years, for which I am heartily sorry. Hunt, I hope, will have six, if it is possible to inflict so many; not so much for his political crimes, but for himself; he is such a thorough ruffian. But he acquitted himself with great ability on his trial.

A narrative is handed about here, written upon the spot by Stanley, a clergyman, brother to Sir John,—a very sensible, reasonable man. Read it before your first speech.

Walter Scott's novel is generally thought to be a failure; its only defenders I have heard of are Lord Grenville and Sir William Grant. Furniture Hope has published a novel; Malthus, a new book of Political Economy. I was glad to see the health of Lord John so firmly established; he is improved in every respect. People are red-hot again about the Manchester business, but the leading topic is Scotch and Yorkshire riots. I am truly sorry you do not come up, but I am not quite sure yet that you won't be provoked to come. Can I do anything for you in town? If any of the Ladies Grey want anything in the dress line, I will execute it better than Lord Lauderdale himself. Ever most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

176.] TO THE EARL GREY.

May 10, 1820.

My dear Lord Grey,

I will try to get you a copy of Stanley's Narrative, which is printed, not published. I have seen your two daughters at Lady Lansdowne's, and at Lady Derby's; they both look well, and the gowns look more like French gowns than other people's gowns do. I am quite out of patience with Lady ——: her fate will be to marry on the Bath road or the Norfolk road; any other such offer on the North road can hardly be expected to occur. I think you might have talked it over with her, and good-naturedly attacked the romantic. The young man was introduced to me, or rather I to him, at Lord Jersey's,—a very decent, creditable-looking young gentleman, and a good judge of sermons. He paid me many compliments upon mine, delivered last Sunday, against bad husbands, so that it is clear he intended to have made a very good one.

The B—— of —— is turned out to be baited next Friday upon the —— case, which appears to be one of great atrocity and persecution. It will end with their rejecting his petition, upon the principle of his having had his remedy in a court of law, of which he has neglected to avail himself; but the real good will be done by the publicity.

The picture of Our Saviour going into Jerusalem, by Haydon, is very bad; the general Exhibition good, as I hear. I have seen West's pictures:—Death on the White Horse—Jesus Rejected; I am sorry to say I admire them both. A new poem, by Milman, author of "Fazio," called "Jerusalem," or "The Fall of Jerusalem," very much admired, as I hear. Dudley Ward a good deal improved,—I believe, principally by Ellis's imitation of him, of which he is aware. The Whig Queen revives slowly; the seditious infant

not yet christened. Lady Jersey as beautiful and as kind and agreeable as ever. Long live Queen Sarah!

Bayley told Tierney, Hunt would have been acquitted if he had called no witnesses. Tierney well, but very old, and unfit for anything but gentle work. I am going to dine with the Granvilles, to meet the Hollands. Lady Granville is nervous, on acccount of her room being lined with Spitalfields silk, which always makes Lady Holland ill; means to pass it off as foreign and smuggled, but has little chance of success. Creevy thinks the session opens in a very mealy-mouthed manner. I like your nephew, Whitbread, the member, very much.

Lady Grey knows my regard and respect, and that I always send her such courtesy and kindness as I am capable of, whether I write it or not.

SYDNEY SMITH.

177.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, York, May 19, 1820.

My dear Jeffrey,

You know what London is for anybody; much more what it is for me, who am feasted so much above my merits and my powers of digestion; accordingly I have done nothing, which I tell you with all penitence. My Irish books, which I took with me to London, are coming back by sea; therefore there is no chance of Ireland for this Review. However, I have gained oral information of considerable consequence. I have sent for the French Travels in Africa, translated and commented upon by Bowditch; and as soon as it comes, shall proceed upon it. I shall now send you a list of what I have offered to do, what you have allowed, and shall make you some fresh offers.

I found in London both my articles very popular,—upon the Poor Laws and America. The passage on Taxation had great success.

I hope you keep a list of books granted. Pray do. No news in town. Voting on one side, reasoning on the other! Everything like economy rejected with horror. Kindest regards to Murray. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

178.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Foston, June 11, 1820.

My dear Lord Holland,

I return you many thanks for your letter, and for the exertion in

my behalf which you have made, with your accustomed friendship and kindness.

The Chancellor is quite right about political sermons, and in this I have erred; but I have a right to preach on general subjects of toleration, and the fault is not mine if the congregation apply my doctrine to passing events. But I will preach no more upon political subjects; I have not done so for many years, from a conviction that it was unfair. You gave me great pleasure by what you said to the Chancellor of my honesty and independence. I sincerely believe I shall deserve the character at your hands as long as I live. To say that I am *sure* I shall deserve it, would be as absurd as if a lady were to express an absolute certainty of her future virtue. In good qualities that are to continue for so many years, we can only *hope* for their continuance.

The incumbent is proceeding by slow degrees to Buxton. I wish him so well, that, under other circumstances, I should often write to know how he was going on; at present I must appear unfriendly, to avoid appearing hypocritical. I have spent *at least* £4000 on this place; for you must remember I had not only a house, but farm-buildings, to make; and there had been no resident clergyman here for a hundred and fifty years. I have also played my part in the usual manner, as doctor, justice, pacifier, preacher, farmer, neighbour, and diner-out. If I can mend my small fortunes, I shall be very glad; if I cannot, I shall not be very sorry. In either case, I shall remain your attached and grateful friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

179.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, July, 1820.

My dear Lady,

. . . . . .

You see revolutions are spreading all over the world—and from armies.

Would Mr —— be pleased with an improvement of public liberty, which originated from the Coldstream Guards? Seriously speaking, these things are catching, and though I want improvement, I should abhor such improvers; besides, we shall get old-fashioned in all our institutions, and be stimulated, through vanity, to changes too rapid and too extensive.

Lord Liverpool's messenger mistook the way, and instead of bringing the mitre to me, took it to my next door neighbour, Dr Carey, who very fraudulently accepted it. Lord Liverpool is extremely angry, and I am to have the next!

SYDNEY SMITH.

180.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Foston, York, Sept. 3, 1820.

My dear Murray,

Many thanks for your kindness in inquiring about your old friends. I am very well, doubling in size every year, and becoming more and more fit for the butcher. Mrs Sydney is much as she was.

I seldom leave home (except on my annual visit to London), and this principally because I cannot afford it. My income remains the same, my family increases in expense. My constitutional gaiety comes to my aid in all the difficulties of life; and the recollection that, having embraced the character of an honest man and a friend to rational liberty, I have no business to repine at that mediocrity of fortune which I *knew* to be its consequence.

Mrs —— is a very amiable young woman, inferior in beauty to Lady Charlotte Campbell, and not so remarkable as Madame de Staël for the vigour of her understanding. Her husband appears to be everything that is amiable and respectable.

The Queen is contemptible; she will be found guilty, and sent out of the country with a small allowance, and in six months be utterly forgotten. So it will, I think, end; but still I think Lord Liverpool very blamable in not having put a complete negative upon the whole thing. It would have been better for the country, and exposed his party to less risk than they have been already exposed to in this business. The Whigs certainly would have refused to meddle with the divorce.

I am sorry to read in your letter such an account of Scotland. Do you imagine the disaffection to proceed from anything but want of employment? or, at least, that full employment, interspersed with a little hanging, will not gradually extinguish the bad spirit?

I have just read "The Abbot;" it is far above common novels, but of very inferior execution to his others, and hardly worth reading. He has exhausted the subject of Scotland, and worn out the few characters that the early periods of Scotch history could supply him with. Meg Merrilies appears afresh in every novel.

I wish you had told me something about yourself. Are you well? rich? happy? Do you digest? Have you any thoughts of marrying? My whole parish is to be sold for £50,000; pray buy it, quit your profession, and turn Yorkshire squire. We should be a model for squires and parsons. God bless you! All the family unite in kind regards. Shall we ever see you again?

S. S.

181.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Sedgeley, October, 1820.

My dear Lady Mary,

I cannot shut my eyes, because, if I open them, I shall see what is disagreeable to the Court. I have no more doubt of the Queen's guilt than I have of your goodness and excellence. But do not, on that account, do me the injustice of supposing that I am deficient in factious feelings and principles, or that I am stricken by the palsy of candour. I sincerely wish the Queen may be acquitted, and the Bill and its authors may be thrown out. Whether justice be done to the Royal plaintiff is of no consequence: indeed he has no right to ask for justice on such points. I must, however, preserve my common sense and my factious principles distinct; and believe the Queen to be a very slippery person, at the moment I rejoice at the general conviction of her innocence.

I am, as you see, near Manchester. While here, I shall study the field of Peterloo.

You will be sorry to hear the trade and manufactures of these counties are materially mended, and are mending. I would not mention this to you, if you were not a good Whig: but I know you will not mention it to anybody. The secret, I much fear, will get out before the meeting of Parliament. There seems to be a fatality which pursues us. When, oh when, shall we be really ruined?

Pray send me some treasonable news about the Queen. Will the people rise? Will the greater part of the House of Lords be thrown into the Thames? Will short work be made of the Bishops? If you know, tell me; and don't leave me in this odious state of innocence, when you can give me so much guilty information, and make me as wickedly instructed as yourself. And if you know that the Bishops are to be massacred, write by return of post.

Do you know how poor —— is handled in the Quarterly Review? It bears the mark of ****; I hope it is not his, for the sake of his character. Let me be duller than Sternhold and Hopkins, if I am to prove my wit at the expense of my friends! and in print too! God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

182.] TO LEONARD HORNER, ESQ.

Foston, 1820.

My dear Sir,

My friend (a potter), to whom we are all so deeply indebted every night and morning, wishes to place a son at Edinburgh, and I have promised to inquire for him. Pray be so good as to tell me

the terms of Pillans, and also mention some good Presbyterian body who takes pupils at no great salary. Never mind whether Whig or Tory, philosopher or no philosopher; a potter has nothing to do with such matters; all I require is that he should be steady and respectable, and that the young fashioner of vases and basins should have an apartment to himself, in which he may meditate intensely on clay. Do me the favour to mention terms.

Why don't you and Mrs Horner come and see us, and hear me upon the subject of turnips? The corn is half destroyed. There is no end to the luck of this Administration; they were beginning to be unpopular with the country gentlemen, but now prices will get up.

I am just returned from a long journey into Somersetshire. Kind regards to your family, and name your time for coming here.

Ever most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

183.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, October, 1820.

My dear Jeffrey,

I shall be much obliged to you to print my two articles in the next Review, and to inform me of your intention on that point, under cover to G. Philips, Esq., M.P., Sedgeley, Manchester.

My Ireland I have taken some pains with. The history of the termination of the rivers of Botany Bay is curious, the article short, and undertaken at your special request that I should write another article.

Is Southey's "Life of Wesley" appropriated? Is Lord John Russell's book, called "Essays and Sketches of Life and Character, by a Gentleman who has left his Lodgings"?

It is impossible but that the Queen will defeat the King, and throw out the Administration. The majority of Bishops, with the Archbishop of York at their head, are against the divorce; the Archbishop of Canterbury is for it.

We have had a good harvest, but there is no market for anything.

I am sorry to see the appointment of Wilson. If Walter Scott can succeed in nominating a successor to Reid and Stewart, there is an end of the University of Edinburgh: your Professors then become competitors in the universal race of baseness and obsequiousness to power.

SYDNEY SMITH.

184.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 19, 1820.

Dear Davenport,

The City of York have met and passed resolutions to address for a change of Ministers. I have not heard of any proposal for a county meeting, nor can I think that anything has yet been done which will turn Ministers out of office; almost all who supported them before will continue to support them; the greater part of their friends who voted against them thought the Queen guilty, and almost all justified Ministers in beginning the process. The case may be different if they make it a point of honour to withhold her just rights from the Queen, or to prevent you or me from praying for her in public. Upon these points I have no doubt they will be defeated; but if they have the good sense to *see* that they are beaten, and not to make a stand for the baggage-waggons when they have lost the field, they may remain Ministers as long as Cheshire makes cheeses. I need not say to you that I am heartily glad the Queen is acquitted.

As for the virtue of the lady, you laymen must decide upon it. The style of manners she has adopted does not exactly tally with that of holy women in the days that are gone; but let us be charitable, and hope for the best.

The business of the Ministry is surely to prorogue Parliament for as long a time as possible. Some new whale may be in sight by that time.

Ever yours, dear Davenport,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Read, if you have not read, all Horace Walpole's letters, wherever you can find them;—the best wit ever published in the shape of letters. Marvel with me at the fine and spirited things in "Anastasius;" they are, it is true, cemented together by a great deal of dull matter.

185.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Lambton Hall, Dec. 15, 1820.

Dear Davenport,

I am just come from Edinburgh, and was staying with Jeffrey when your letter arrived. He does not like his editorial functions interfered with, and I do not like to interfere with them; so I must leave you and him to settle as to the article itself. If you write it, and send it to me, I will play the part of Aristarchus to

you; but remember,—do not accept me for an office of that nature, if you are afraid of truth and severity; upon such subjects I will flatter nobody; nor is it, I am sure, in your nature, or in your habits, to require any such thing.

I shall be at Foston on Sunday, and remain there for the rest of my life.

Scotland is becoming Whiggish and Radical. There is a great meeting at Durham to-day, in which Lord Grey is to bear a part. I have been staying with him. The Alnwick people came over with an address, and drank forty-four bottles of sherry, and fifty-two of old port, besides ale!

This seems a fine place in a very ugly country. The house is full of every possible luxury, and lighted with gas.

SYDNEY SMITH.

186.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Dec. 30, 1820.

Dear Lady Grey,

The day I left Lambton was, fortunately for me, a very cold day, as the stage-coach was full. We had the captain of a Scotch vessel trading to Russia, an Edinburgh lawyer, an apothecary, a London horse-dealer, and myself. They were all very civil and good-humoured; the captain a remarkably clever, entertaining man. All were for the Queen, except the horse-dealer.

Lady Georgiana Morpeth called here yesterday, accompanied by Agar Ellis, who is on a short visit to Castle Howard. The Morpeths are just returned from the Duke of Devonshire's. Ellice thinks the Ministry will not go out, but proceed languidly with small majorities; I think it most probable they will be driven out. The appointment of —— is too ridiculous to be true. If Peel refuses, it is, I suppose, because he does not choose to accept a place in a carriage just about to be overturned. The good people of Edinburgh, putting together my visit to Lord Grey, my ulterior progress to Edinburgh, and the political meeting in that town consequent upon it, have settled that Lord Grey planned the meeting, and that I performed the diplomatic part.

I will fit the Lady Greys up with conversation for the spring, and make them the most dashing girls in London. Poor ——! if in love before, what will he be next spring? Poor B——! poor E——! poor everybody! The effect will be universal.

My kindest regards to Lord Grey and your daughters. My children are all perfectly well, so is Mrs Sydney; Douglas, my

eldest son, has distinguished himself at Westminster, and is, to my great delight, become passionately fond of books.

Always, my dear Lady Grey, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—Only think of that obstinate Lord Lauderdale publishing his speech! But Lord Lauderdale, with all his good qualities and talents, has an appetite for being hooted and pelted, which is ten times a more foolish passion than the love of being applauded and huzzaed. You and I know a politician who has no passion for one thing or the other; but does his duty, and trusts to chance how it is taken.

187.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, 1820.

My dear Jeffrey,

For the number next but one, I have engaged to write an article on Ireland, which shall contain all the information I can collect, detailed as well as I know how to detail it.

The Unitarians think the doctrine of the Trinity to be a profanation of the Scriptures; you compel them to marry in your churches, or rather, I should say, we compel them to marry in our churches; and when the male and female Dissenter are kneeling before the altar, much is said to them by the priest, of this, to them, abhorred doctrine. They are about to petition Parliament that their marriages may be put upon the same footing as those of Catholics and Quakers. The principles of religious liberty which I have learnt (perhaps under you) make me their friend in the question; and if you approve, I will write an article upon it. Upon the receipt of your letter in the affirmative, I will write to the dissenting king, William Smith, for information. Pray have the goodness to answer by return of post, or as soon after as you can, if it is but a word; as despatch in these matters, and in my inacccessible situation, is important.

SYDNEY SMITH.

188.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Bath: no date.

Dear Davenport,

I think Jeffrey too timid, but he says that the Edinburgh Review is watched, and that there is a great disposition to attack it either in Scotland or London; and you must allow that Jeffrey or

Brougham in the pillory would be a delicious occurrence for the Tories: I think John Williams would come and pelt.

Great light will be thrown upon the circumstances of the massacre by Hunt's trial, which of course will be circulated widely through the country, and will furnish you with a good plea for the introduction of the subject. I heard Hunt at York, and was much struck with his boldness, dexterity, and shrewdness. Without any education at all, he is the most powerful barrister this day on the Northern Circuit: of course, I do not mean the best instructed, but the man best calculated by nature for that sort of intellectual exertion.

You see by my letter I am in Bath,—to me, one of the most disagreeable places in the world; but I am on a visit to my father, eighty-two years of age, in full possession, not only of his senses, but of a very vigorous and superior understanding.

I have written two articles in this Edinburgh Review,—Poor Laws and Seybert's America,—but they are both of a dry and discouraging nature.

Adieu! I hope to see you soon. Ever truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

189.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Foston, 1820.

Dear Mrs Meynell,

It will give me great pleasure to hear of your health and continued well-doing. I suspect the little boy will be christened Hugo, that being an ancient name in the Meynell family; and the mention of the little boy is an additional reason why you should write to me before he comes. You will never write after, for the infant of landed estate is so precious, that he would exhaust the sympathies, and fill up the life, of seven or eight mothers. The usual establishment for an eldest landed baby is, two wet nurses, two ditto dry, two aunts, two physicians, two apothecaries; three female friends of the family, unmarried, advanced in life; and often, in the nursery, one clergyman, six flatterers, and a grandpapa! Less than this would not be decent.

We are all well, and keep large fires, as it behoveth those who pass their summers in England.

I have not seen a living soul out of my family since I left London. It is some consolation to think I have avoided the awkward dilemma about the Queen. I should have thought it base not to call, and yet

. . . . . .

My conjecture is that there will be no compromise, and that the Queen will be beaten out of the field. The chances against this

are that the King's nerves will give way. You do not know that —— is in the Green Bag. You thought him full of poetry alone, but gallantry and treason are in his composition. The Queen and her handmaids have been much exposed to the shafts of calumny on account of that too amiable and seducing fellow, who is at once a Lovelace and a Pope. Write me a line to show we are friends, and I will announce the event.

Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

190.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

York, 1820.

Dear Mrs Meynell,

We have all been ill,—that is, all but I ;—a sort of fever ; and they have all been cured by me, for I am deeper in medicine than ever.

Douglas is gone to school ; not with a light heart, for the first year of Westminster in college is severe :—an intense system of tyranny, of which the English are very fond, and think it fits a boy for the world ; but the world, bad as it is, has nothing half so bad.

I strongly recommend you to read Captain Golownin's narrative of his imprisonment in Japan ; it is one of the most entertaining books I have read for a long time. You must also read —— ——. I would let you off if I could, but my sense of duty will not permit me to do so ; for it is, and has long been, my province, to fit you up for London conversation ; Mrs Crape (your maid) dresses you —your other half falls to me.

I hope your children are all well ; if they are not, I am sure you are not ; and if you are not, I shall not be so. So God bless you, my dear Gee ! and remember me kindly to your husband.

Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

191.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

February 2, 1821.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have read Southey, and think it so fair and reasonable a book, that I have little or nothing to say about it ; so that I follow your advice, and abandon it to any one who may undertake it. What I should say, if I undertook it, would be very unfavourable to Methodism, which you object to, though upon what grounds I know not. Of course Methodists, when attacked, cry out, "Infidel ! Atheist !"—these are the weapons with which all fanatics and bigots fight ; but should we be intimidated by this, if we do not deserve

it? And does it follow that any examination of the faults of Dissenters is a panegyric upon the Church of England? But these are idle questions, as I do not mean to review it. I have written an article upon Dissenters' marriages, which I will send the moment I get some books from town. On other points I am stopped for books.

I purpose sending you a short article upon the savage and illegal practice of setting spring-guns and traps for poachers.

God bless you! Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

192.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

February 9, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

There is an end for ever of all idea of the Whigs coming into power. The kingdom is in the hands of an oligarchy, who see what a good thing they have got of it, and are too cunning and too well aware of the *tameability* of mankind to give it up. Lord Castlereagh smiles when Tierney prophesies resistance. His Lordship knows very well that he has got the people under for ninety-nine purposes out of a hundred, and that he can keep them where he has got them. Of all ingenious instruments of despotism, I most commend a popular assembly where the majority are paid and hired, and a few bold and able men, by their brave speeches, make the people believe they are free.

Lord Lauderdale has sent me two pamphlets, and two hundred and thirty pounds of salt-fish.

I hear you have taken a house in Stratford Place. The houses there are very good. You will be much more accessible than heretofore. A few yards in London dissolve or cement friendship.

SYDNEY SMITH.

193.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Foston, Feb. 10, 1821.

My dear Davenport,

When shall you be in town? There is an end for ever of all Whig Administrations.

I am glad you agree with me about "Anastasius." I am writing an article in the Edinburgh Review against Squires for using spring-guns, and delicately insisting upon the usefulness of making two or three examples in that line. I have Southey's "Life of Wesley." To make a saleable book seems to have been a main

consideration; but it is not unreasonable, and is very well written.

I have taken lodgings in York for myself and family during the Assizes, to enable them to stare out of the window, there being nothing visible where we live but crows.

Mrs F——, the liberty woman, is in York. There are several Scotch families staying there. No bad place for change, cheapness, and comparative warmth.

Yours, dear Davenport, very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

194.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Foston, Feb. 12, 1821.

Dear Mrs Meynell,

I was very glad to receive your letter, and to find you were well and prosperous.

The articles written by me in the Edinburgh Review are, that upon Ireland, and that upon Oxley's "Survey of Botany Bay."

The Archbishop of York makes me a very good neighbour, and is always glad to see me.

I agree with you that there is an end for ever of the Whigs coming into power. The country belongs to the Duke of Rutland, Lord Lonsdale, the Duke of Newcastle, and about twenty other holders of boroughs. They are our masters! If any little opportunity presents itself, we will hang them, but most probably there will be no such opportunity; it always is twenty to one against the people. There is nothing (if you will believe the Opposition) so difficult as to bully a whole people; whereas, in fact, there is nothing so easy, as that great artist Lord Castlereagh so well knows.

Let me beg of you to take more care of those beautiful geraniums, and not let the pigs in upon them. Geranium-fed bacon is of a beautiful colour; but it takes so many plants to fatten one pig, that such a system can never answer! I cannot conceive who put it into your head. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

195.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, March 27, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

Nothing so difficult to send, or which is so easily spoilt in the

carriage, as news. It was fresh, and seemed true, when you packed it up; that is all you are answerable for.

I shall be in town the 24th of April, and am very glad to find you are so near a neighbour. We have been at the Assizes at York for three weeks, where there is always a great deal of dancing and provincial joy.

I am very sorry the Hollands have left the pavement of London, because, when I come to London for a short time, I hate fresh air and green leaves, and waste of time in going and coming; but I love the Hollands so much, that I would go to them in any spot, however innocent, sequestered, and rural. You have been in town a fortnight, and do not tell me to whom your daughters are going to be married. I suppose —— borrows the watchman's coat, and cries the hours up and down Stratford Place. How is Lord Grey? I hope you are on good terms with that eminent statesman, for you never mention his name.

I am delighted with Hume and Creevy. You will have the goodness to excuse me, but I am a Jacobin. I confess it, with tears in my eyes; and I have struggled in secret against this dreadful propensity, to a degree of which your loyal mind can have no idea. Do not mention my frailty even to my friend Lady Georgiana Morpeth, but pity me, and employ a few minutes every day in converting me.

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

196.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Taunton, Aug. 7, 1821.

My dear Jeffrey,

I have travelled all across the country with my family, to see my father, now eighty-two years of age. I wish, at such an age, you, and all like you, may have as much enjoyment of life; more, you can hardly have at any age. My father is one of the very few people I have ever seen improved by age. He is become careless, indulgent, and anacreontic.

I shall proceed to write a review of Scarlett's Poor Bill, and of Keppel Craven's Tour, according to the license you granted me; not for the number about to come, but for the number after that. The review of the first will be very short, and that of the second not long. Length, indeed, is not what you have to accuse *me* of. The above-mentioned articles, with perhaps Wilks's Sufferings of the Protestants in the South of France, and the Life of Suard, will constitute my contribution for the number after the next (*i.e.*, the 71st).

The wretchedness of the poor in this part of the country is very afflicting. The men are working for one shilling per day, all the year round; and if a man have only three children, he receives no relief from the parish, so that five human beings are supported for little more than tenpence a day. They are evidently a dwindling and decaying race; nor should I be the least surprised if a plague in the shape of typhus fever broke out here.

Do me the favour to remember me to all my friends, and to number amongst those who are sincerely and affectionately attached to you,

SYDNEY SMITH.

I beg my kind regards to Mrs Jeffrey, and to the little tyrant who rules the family.

197.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Lydiard, Taunton, August, 1821.

Dear Davenport,

Your letter followed, and found me here this day. You are right to see Dugald Stewart. I have seen nothing of him for ten or twelve years, but am very glad to give him such a token of my regard and goodwill as the introduction in question. Read the letter, blush, seal, and deliver!

There will be some distress for a year or two, but it will soon be over. Lay aside your Whiggish delusions of ruin; learn to look the prosperity of the country in the face, and bear it as well as you can.

The price of labour here all the year round is one shilling a day, and no parish relief unless the applicant has four children. The country is beautiful, and the common arts of life as they were in the Heptarchy.

Ever yours, dear Davenport, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

198.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Sept. 16, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

How do you all do? Have you got the iron back? Have you put it up? Does it make the chimney worse than before? for this is the general result of all improvements recommended by friends.

A very wet harvest here; but I have saved all my corn by injecting large quantities of fermented liquors into the workmen, and making them work all night.

SYDNEY SMITH.

199.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Nov. 1, 1821.

My dear Lady Grey,

Pray tell me how you are, and if you are making a good recovery. I have long thought of writing, but feared you would be plagued by such sort of letters.

An old aunt has died and left me an estate in London; this puts me a little at my ease, and will, in some degree, save me from the hitherto necessary, but unpleasant, practice of making sixpence perform the functions and assume the importance of a shilling.

Part of my little estate is the Guildhall Coffee-house, in King Street, Cheapside. I mean to give a ball there. Will you come?

I am very sorry for poor Sir Robert Wilson. If he has been guilty of any indiscretion, I cannot see the necessity of visiting it with so severe a punishment. So much military valour might be considered as an apology for a little civil indiscretion; but if *no* indiscretion has been committed, why, then publish in the papers a narrative of his whole conduct, from his getting up on that day, to his lying down. Let him pledge his word for its accuracy, and challenge denial and contradiction. This would turn the tables immediately in his favour.

How is Lord Grey? Is he good friends with me? If he is, give him my very kind regards, and if he is *not;* for I never value people as they value me, but as they are valuable; so pray send me an account of yourself, and whether you have got out of sago and tapioca into rabbit and boiled chicken. God send you may be speedily advanced to a mutton-chop!

SYDNEY SMITH.

200.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Foston, Nov. 11, 1821.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

Mr —— is a very gentlemanly, sensible man, and I was sure would tolerate me. My pretensions to do well with the world are threefold:—first, I am fond of talking nonsense; secondly, I am civil; thirdly, I am brief. I may be flattering myself; but if I am not, it is not easy to get very wrong with these habits.

The steady writing of Lord F——'s frank indicates a prolonged existence of ten years. If a stroke to the *t* or a dot to the *i* were wanting, little —— might have some chance; but I do not think a single Jew out of the Twelve Tribes would lend him a farthing upon post-obits, if he had seen my Lord's writing.

Agriculture is bowed down to the ground she cultivates; the plough stands still, the steward's bag is empty, corn sells for nothing, but benevolent people will take it off your hands for a small premium. I do not abuse their good-nature; but leave it to the natural, and now the only, animals that show any avidity for grain—the rats and mice.

We are all anxious to hear something about you, and all recommend that it should be a girl. Kind regards to your husband and the baby.

SYDNEY SMITH.

201.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 29, 1821.

My dear Murray,

To see the spectacle of honour conferred upon a man who deserves it, and he an old friend, is a great temptation, but I cannot yield to it. I must not leave home any more this year.

In what state is the Review? Is Scott's novel out? Be so good as to ask, or say, if you know, in what odour the "Encyclopædia Perthensis" is in Edinburgh. It has fallen to the inconceivably low price of seven guineas. I do not want an Encyclopædia for dissertations and essays, but for common information;—How is Turkey leather dyed?—What is the present state of the Levant trade, &c., &c.

How little you understand young Wedgewood! If he appears to love waltzing, it is only to catch fresh figures for cream-jugs. Depend upon it, he will have Jeffrey and you upon some of his vessels, and you will enjoy an argillaceous immortality.

The rumours of to-day are, that the Ministry have given way to the King, and—Lord Conyngham is to be Chamberlain. Ever your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

202.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, Dec. 20, 1821.

My dear Lady Mary,

In the first place I went to Lord Grey's, and stayed with them three or four days; from thence I went to Edinburgh, where I had not been for ten years. I found a noble passage into the town, and new since my time; two beautiful English chapels, two of the handsomest library-rooms in Great Britain, and a wonderful increase of shoes and stockings, streets and houses. When I lived there, very few maids had shoes and stockings, but plodded about

the house with feet as big as a family Bible, and legs as large as portmanteaus. I stayed with Jeffrey. My time was spent with the Whig leaders of the Scotch bar, a set of very honest, clever men, each possessing thirty-two different sorts of wine. My old friends were glad to see me; some had turned Methodists—some had lost their teeth—some had grown very rich—some very fat—some were dying—and, alas! alas! many were dead; but the world is a coarse enough place, so I talked away, comforted some, praised others, kissed some old ladies, and passed a very riotous week.

From Edinburgh I went to Dunbar,—Lord Lauderdale's—a comfortable house, with a noble sea-view. I was struck with the great good-nature and vivacity of his daughters.

From thence to Lambton. And here I ask, what use of wealth so luxurious and delightful as to light your house with gas? What folly, to have a diamond necklace or a Correggio, and not to light your house with gas! The splendour and glory of Lambton Hall make all other houses mean. How pitiful to submit to a farthing-candle existence, when science puts such intense gratification within your reach! Dear lady, spend all your fortune in a gas-apparatus. Better to eat dry bread by the splendour of gas, than to dine on wild beef with wax-candles; and so good-bye, dear Lady.

SYDNEY SMITH.

203.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

December 30, 1821.

My dear Jeffrey,

. . . . . .

You must have had a lively time at Edinburgh from this "Beacon." But Edinburgh is rather too small for such explosions, where the conspirators and conspired against must be guests at the same board, and sleep under the same roof.

The articles upon Madame de Staël and upon Wilks's Protestants appear to me to be very good. The article upon Scotch Juries is surely too long.

The "Pirate," I am afraid, has been scared and alarmed by the Beacon! It is certainly one of the least fortunate of Sir Walter Scott's productions. It seems now that he can write nothing without Meg Merrilees and Dominie Sampson! One other such novel, and there 's an end; but who can last for ever? who ever lasted so long?

We are ruined here by an excess of bread and water. Too much rain, too much corn!

God bless you, my dear friend!

SYDNEY SMITH.

204.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

March 17, 1822.

My dear Jeffrey,

I had written three parts in four of the review I promised you of Miss Wright's book on America, and could have put it in your hands ten days since; but your letter restricts me so on the subject of raillery, that I find it impossible to comply with your conditions. There are many passages in my review which would make the Americans very angry, and—which is more to my immediate purpose—make you very loath to publish it; and therefore, to avoid putting you in the awkward predicament of printing what you disapprove, or disappointing me, I withdraw my pretensions. I admire the Americans, and in treating of America, should praise her great institutions, and laugh at her little defects. The reasons for your extreme prudery I do not understand, nor is it necessary I should do so. I am satisfied that you are a good pilot of our literary vessel, and give you credit when I do not perceive your motives.

I am at York. Brougham is here; I have not seen him yet. Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

205.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

London, May 10, 1822.

Dear Mrs Meynell,

I have got into all my London feelings, which come on the moment I pass Hyde Park Corner. I am languid, unfriendly, heartless, selfish, sarcastic, and insolent. Forgive me, thou inhabitant of the plains, child of nature, rural woman, agricultural female! Remember what you were in Hill Street, and pardon the vices inevitable in the greatest of cities.

They take me here for an ancient country clergyman, and think I cannot see!! . . . How little they know your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

206.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, June 22, 1822.

My dear Jeffrey,

I understand from your letter that there only remains the time between this and the 12th of July for your stay in Edinburgh, and

that then you go north; this puts a visit out of the question at present. I think, when I do come, I shall come alone: I should be glad to show Saba a little of the world, in the gay time of Edinburgh; but this is much too serious a tax upon your hospitality, and upon Mrs Jeffrey's time and health; and so there is an end of that plan. As for myself, I have such a dislike to say No, to anybody who does me the real pleasure and favour of asking me to come and see him, that I assent, when I know that I am not quite sure of being able to carry my good intentions into execution; and so I am considered uncertain and capricious, when I really ought to be called friendly and benevolent. I will mend my manners in future, and be very cautious in making engagements. The first use I make of my new virtue is to say that I will, from time to time, come and see you in Edinburgh; but these things cannot be very frequent, on account of expense, visits to London (where all my relations live), the injustice of being long away from my parish and family, my education of one of my sons here, and the penalties of the law. At the same time, I can see no reason why you do not bring Mrs Jeffrey and your child, and pay us a visit in the long vacation. We have a large house and a large farm, and I need not say how truly happy we shall be to see you. I think you ought to do this.

Pray say, with my kind regards to Thomson, that I find it absolutely impossible to write such a review on the Cow Pox as will satisfy either him or myself for this number. I will write a review for the next, if so please him; what sort of one it may be, the gods only know. I will write a line to Thomson. I will send you the Bishop if I can get him ready; if not, certainly for the next number. I never break my word about reviews, except when I am in London. Pray forgive me; I am sure your readers will.

I read Cockburn's speech with great pleasure. I admire, in the strongest manner, the conduct of the many upright and patriotic lawyers now at the Scotch bar, and think it a great privilege to call many of them friends; such a spectacle refreshes me in the *rattery* and scoundrelism of public life.

Allen and Fox stopped here for a day. My country neighbours had no idea who they were; I passed off Allen as the commentator on the Book of Martyrs. Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

207.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, August, 1822.

Dear Lady Mary,

Many thanks for the venison, and say, if you please, what ought

to be said to my Lord. It was excellent. I shall make a bow to Chillingham as I pass it on the stage-coach on my way to Scotland, where I am going to see my friend Jeffrey.

I have had a great run of philosophers this summer;—Dr and Mrs Marcet, Sir Humphry Davy, and Mr Warburton, and divers small mineralogists and chemists. Sir Humphry Davy was really very agreeable,—neither witty, eloquent, nor sublime, but reasonable and instructive.

I remember the laughing we had together at C—— House; and I thank God, who has made me poor, that he has made me merry. I think it a better gift than much wheat and bean land, with a doleful heart.

I am truly rejoiced at the recovery of Duke John; he is an honest, excellent person, full of good feelings and right opinions, and moreover a hearty laugher. I am glad to hear of the marriage of Mr Russell with Miss ——. The manufacture of Russells is a public and important concern. Adieu! Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

208.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston, Nov. 1, 1822.

My dear Lady Mary,

You will be sorry to hear that Douglas has had bad health ever since he went to Westminster, and has been taken thence to be nursed in a typhus fever, from which he is slowly recovering. Mrs Sydney set off for London last week, and is likely to remain there some time; I find the state of a widower a very wretched one.

Lady —— is unwell, and expects to be confined in February. The public is indebted to every lady of fashion who brings a fresh Whig into the world. It is a long time since you wrote to me; the process by which I discover this is amusing enough. I feel uneasy and dissatisfied; the turnips are white and globular—no blame imputable to the farm—no Dissenters, no Methodists in the parish—all right with the Church of England; and after a few minutes' reflection, I discover what it is I want, and seize upon it as the sick dog does upon the proper herb.

. . . . . .

I know —— never spares me, but that is no reason why I should not spare him; I had rather be the ox than the butcher.

Write to me immediately; I feel it necessary to my constitution; and I am, dear Lady,

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

209.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

November, 1822.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

I think Adam Blair beautifully done—quite beautifully. It is not every lady who confesses she reads it; but if you had been silent upon the subject, or even if you had denied it, you would have done yourself very little good with me.

Our house is full of company: Miss Fox and Miss Vernon; Mr and Mrs Spottiswode, with their children; and Captain Gordon, an old and esteemed friend of mine.

I hear from all your neighbours that you are much liked, but that they should not have supposed you had written so many articles in the Edinburgh Review as you are known to have done.

God bless you, my dear friend! Keep for me always a little corner of regard.

SYDNEY SMITH.

210.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

Foston.

My dear Lady Mary,

I shall be obliged to you to procure for me Mr Rogers's verses upon the Temple of the Graces at Woburn: I thought them very pretty, and should be glad to possess them.

Lord and Lady Grenville have been staying at Castle Howard, where we met them. Whatever other merits they have, they have at least that of being extremely civil and well-bred; good qualities which, being put into action every day, make a great mass of merit in the course of life.

I am glad you liked what I said of Mrs Fry. She is very unpopular with the clergy: examples of living, active virtue disturb our repose, and give birth to distressing comparisons: we long to burn her alive.

Who knows his secret sins? I find, upon reference to Collins's Peerage, I have been in the habit for some months past of misspelling Lord Tankerville's name; and you have left me in this state of ignorance and imperfection, from which I was awakened by a loud scream from Mrs Sydney, who cast her eye upon the direction of the letter, and saw the habitual sin of which I have been guilty.

On account of the scarcity of water, many respectable families in this part of the world wash their faces only every other day. It is a real distress, and increasing rather than diminishing. God bless you!

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

211.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

No date.

My dear Friend,

I am not in London, but on my way to it, at Holland House. The person taken for me is a very fat clergyman, but not I. So singular a letter as yours I never saw. You say, "I shall be on the banks of the Thames till Tuesday, after that at C—— House, but before Tuesday you will find me at the Privy Garden." Can you thus multiply yourself? If you can, pray let me have a copy of you at Foston; and pray, dear Lady Mary, let it be well done, and very much like the original; not a hasty sketch, but minute;—and take no liberties with the pencil. The great merit of a copy is fidelity.

I should have been glad to renew my acquaintance with the Edgeworths.

SYDNEY SMITH.

212.] TO LADY MARY BENNETT.

No date.

My dear Lady Mary,

Having written what I had to write on Small Pox and the Bishop of Peterborough, I wish to discuss Mr Biggs's Report of Botany Bay. Mr Bennett was so good as to offer me the loan of his Report; if he remain in the same gracious intentions towards me, will you have the goodness to desire him to send it by return of post?

I have been making a long visit to my friends in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Their wealth and prosperity know no bounds: I do not mean only the Philippi, but of all who ply the loom. They talk of raising corps of manufacturers to keep the country gentlemen in order, and to restrain the present Jacobinism of the plough; the Royal Corduroys—the First Regiment of Fustian—the Bombazine Brigade, &c. &c.

I have given the Bishop of Peterborough a good dressing. What right has anybody to ask anybody *eighty-seven* questions? and tell me (this is only one question) what agreeable books I am to read. I hear of a great deal of ruin in distant countries; there is none here, but then the soil is good.

Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

213.] TO LADY WENLOCK.

Foston, Dec. 11, 1822.

My dear Madam,

We will keep ourselves clear of all engagements the first week of the new year, and in readiness to obey your summons for any day of it. I care not whom I meet, provided it is not Sir ——, and to invite anybody to meet him would be a very strong measure. Sir William and Lady Gordon are very agreeable people, and indeed I should be ashamed of myself if I were not a good deal captivated by her; but upon that point I have nothing to reproach myself with. Lewis, I suppose, was hastening on to the Treasury, with the accumulation of guilty jobs that he had discovered in Scotland; he will make a very faithful servant to the public for two or three years, beyond which period it would be a little unreasonable perhaps to expect the duration of his public virtues.

I remain, my dear Madam, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

214.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Jan. 31, 1823.

Dear Lady Grey,

About half after five in the evening (three feet of snow on the ground, and all communication with Christendom cut off) a chaise and four drove up to the parsonage, and from it issued Sir James and his appendages. His letter of annunciation arrived the following morning. Miss Mackintosh brought me your kind reproaches for never having written to you; to which I replied, "Lord and Lady Grey know very well that I have a sincere regard and affection and respect for them, and they will attribute my silence only to my reluctance to export the stupidity in which I live."

I am so very modest a man, that I am never afraid of giving my opinion upon any subject. Pray tell me if you understand this sort of modesty. There certainly *is* such a species of that virtue, and I claim it. But whether my claim is just or unjust, my opinion is, that there will be some repeals of heavy taxes, and a great deal of ill-humour,—probably a Whig Administration for a year,—no reform, no revolution: if no Whig Administration, Canning in for about two years, till they have formed their plans for flinging him overboard: Canning to be conciliatory and laudatory for about three months, and then to relapse: prices to rise after next harvest.

You have read "Peveril;" a moderate production between his best and his worst; rather agreeable than not.

I hope you have read and admired Doblado. To get a Catholic priest who would turn King's evidence is a prodigious piece of good luck; but it may damage the Catholic question.

Lord Grey has, I hear, been pretty well. I was called up to London a second time this year, and went to Bowood, where I spent a very agreeable week with the Hollands, Luttrell, Rogers, &c. It is a very cheerful, agreeable, comfortable house.

We have a good deal of company in our little parsonage this year;—all pure Whigs, if I may include —— in this number. That young man will be nothing but agreeable; enough for any man, if his name were not ——, and if the country did not seem to have acquired an hereditary right to his talents and services.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Kindest regards to Lord Grey and your children, from your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Mackintosh had seventy volumes in his carriage! None of the glasses would draw up or let down, but one; and he left his hat behind him at our house.

215.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Foston, Feb. 18, 1823.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

You are quite right about happiness. I would always lay a wager in favour of its being found among persons who spend their time dully rather than in gaiety. Gaiety—English gaiety—is seldom come at lawfully; friendship, or propriety, or principle, are sacrificed to obtain it; we cannot produce it without more effort than it is worth; our destination is, to look vacant, and to sit silent.

My articles in the last number are, the attack on the Bishop of Peterborough, and on Small Pox. If you do not know what to think of the first, take my word that it is merited. Of the last you may think what you please, provided you vaccinate Master and Miss Meynell.

I am afraid we shall go to war: I am sorry for it. I see every day in the world a thousand acts of oppression which I should like to resent, but I cannot afford to play the Quixote. Why are the English to be the sole vindicators of the human race? Ask Mr Meynell how many persons there are within fifteen miles of him who deserve to be horsewhipped, and who would be very much improved by such a process. But every man knows he must keep down his feelings, and endure the spectacle of triumphant folly and tyranny.

Adieu, my dear old friend. I shall be very glad to see you again, and to witness that happiness which is your lot and your *due;* two circumstances not always united. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

216.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, York, Feb. 19, 1823.

My dear Lady Grey,

In seeing my handwriting again so soon, you will say that your attack upon me for my indisposition to letter-writing has been more successful than you wished it to be; but I cannot help saying a word about war.

For God's sake, do not drag me into another war! I am worn down, and worn out, with crusading and defending Europe, and protecting mankind; I *must* think a little of myself. I am sorry for the Spaniards—I am sorry for the Greeks—I deplore the fate of the Jews; the people of the Sandwich Islands are groaning under the most detestable tyranny; Bagdad is oppressed; I do not like the present state of the Delta; Thibet is not comfortable. Am I to fight for all these people? The world is bursting with sin and sorrow. Am I to be champion of the Decalogue, and to be eternally raising fleets and armies to make all men good and happy? We have just done saving Europe, and I am afraid the consequence will be, that we shall cut each other's throats. No war, dear Lady Grey!—no eloquence; but apathy, selfishness, common sense, arithmetic! I beseech you, secure Lord Grey's swords and pistols, as the housekeeper did Don Quixote's armour. If there is another war, life will not be worth having. I will go to war with the King of Denmark if he is impertinent to you, or does any injury to Howick: but for no other cause.

"May the vengeance of Heaven" overtake all the Legitimates of Verona? but, in the present state of rent and taxes, they must be *left* to the vengeance of Heaven. I allow fighting in such a cause to be a luxury; but the business of a prudent, sensible man, is to guard against luxury.

I shall hope to be in town in the course of the season, and that I shall find your health re-established, and your fortune unimpaired by the depredations of Lady Ponsonby at piquette. To that excellent lady do me the favour to present my kind remembrances and regards.

"Doblado's Letters" are by Blanco White of Holland House. They are very valuable for their perfect authenticity, as well as for the ability with which they are written. They are upon the state of Spain and the Catholic religion, previous to the present revolution.

The line of bad Ministers is unbroken. If the present will not do, others will be found as illiberal and unfriendly to improvement. These things being so, I turn my attention to dinners, in which I am acquiring every day better notions, and losing prejudices and puerilities; but I retain all my prejudices in favour of my hosts of Howick, and in these points my old age confirms the opinions of my youth. Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

217.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

March 3, 1823.

Dear Allen,

I beg your pardon for my mistake, but I thought you had written constantly in the Review; and, so thinking, I knew Spanish subjects to be familiar to you.

Upon the absurd and unprincipled conduct of the French there can be but one opinion; still I would rather the nascent liberties of Spain were extinguished than go to war to defend them. I am afraid these sentiments will displease you, but I cannot help it. We fight in this case either from feeling or prudence. If from feeling, why not for Greece? why not for Naples? why not for the Spanish colonies? If from prudence, better that Spain and Portugal were under the government of Viceroy Blacas or Châteaubriand, than that we should go to war.

I object to your dying so soon as you propose; I hate to lose old and good friends. I am not sure that we could find the same brains over again. I am not churchman enough to wish you away. We will live and laugh for thirty years to come. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

218.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Foston, July 11, 1823.

Dear Lady Holland,

Hannibal would not enter Capua. I have got back all my rural virtues. Would it be prudent to demoralise myself twice in a season by re-entering the metropolis? I will stop short at the Green Man at Barnet, and venture no farther. Yours,

S. S.

219.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

October 1, 1823.

Dear Lady Holland,

I was prepared to set off for London, when a better account arrived from Dr Bond. I think you mistake Bond's character in supposing he could be influenced by partridges. He is a man of very independent mind, with whom pheasants at least, or perhaps turkeys, are necessary.

. . . . . .

Nothing can be more disgusting than an Oratorio. How absurd, to see five hundred people fiddling like madmen about the Israelites in the Red Sea! Lord Morpeth pretends to say he was pleased, but I see a great change in him since the music-meeting. Pray tell Luttrell he did wrong not to come to the music. It tired me to death; it would have pleased him. He is a melodious person, and much given to sacred music. In his fits of absence I have heard him hum the Hundredth Psalm! (Old Version.)

Ever yours, dear Lady,

SYDNEY SMITH.

220.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

October 19, 1823.

We have been visiting country squires. I got on very well, and am reckoned popular. We came last from —— ——. Mrs —— and I begin to be better acquainted, and she improves. I hope *I* do; though, as I profess to live with open doors and windows, I am seen (by those who think it worth while to look at me) as well in five minutes as in five years.

I distinguished myself a good deal at M. A. Taylor's in dressing salads; pray tell Luttrell this. I have thought about salads much, and will talk over the subject with you and Mr Luttrell when I have the pleasure to find you together.

I am rejoiced at the Duke of Norfolk's success, and should have liked to see Lord Holland's joy. A few scraps of victory are thrown to the wise and just in the long battle of life.

. . . . . .

I could have told before that bark would not do for the Duke of Bedford. What *will* do for him is, carelessness, amusement, fresh air, and the most scrupulous management of sleep, food, and exercise; also, there must be friction, and mercury, and laughing.

The Duchess wrote me a very amusing note in answer to mine, for which I am much obliged. All duchesses seem agreeable to

clergymen; but she would really be a very clever, agreeable woman, if she were married to a neighbouring vicar; and I should often call upon her.

Dear Lady Holland, your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

221.] *Written on the first page of a Letter of his youngest Daughter to her friend Miss ——.*

Foston, 1823.

Dear little Gee,

Many thanks for your kind and affectionate letter. I cannot recollect what you mean by our kindness; all that I remember is, that you came to see us, and we all thought you very pleasant, good-hearted, and strongly infected with Lancastrian tones and pronunciations. God bless you, dear child! I shall always be very fond of you till you grow tall, and speak without an accent, and marry some extremely disagreeable person.

Ever very affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

222.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

About 1823.

. . . . . .

No pecuniary embarrassments equal to the embarrassments of a professed wit, like Mr ——: an internal demand upon him for pleasantry, and a consciousness, on his part, of a limited income of the facetious; the disappointment of his creditors,—the importunity of duns,—the tricks, forgeries, and false coin he is forced to pay instead of gold!

Pity a wit, and remember with affection your stupid friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

223.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Foston, Aug. 28, 1824.

My dear Davenport,

I did not write one syllable of Hall's book. When first he showed me his manuscript, I told him it would not do; it was too witty and brilliant. He then wrote it over again, and I told him it would do very well indeed; and it *has* done very well. He is a very painstaking person.

I am very sorry I have not a single copy left of my first Assize Sermon. I thought I had sent you a copy: I would immediately

send you another if I had one to send. You will see an article of mine in this Review, No. 80, upon America. Lady Suffolk's Letters, in No. 79, were reviewed by Agar Ellis.

I hear your sister is going with a multitude of Berrys and Lindsays to Scotland. I hope she will be retained if we get leave to visit your papa.

Yours, my dear Davenport, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

224.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

September 23, 1824.

My dear Jeffrey,

If you mean that my article itself is light and scanty, I agree to that; reminding you that lightness and flimsiness are my line of reviewing. If you mean that my notice of M——'s book is scanty, that also is true; for I think the book very ill done: still, it is done by an honest, worthy man, who has neither bread nor butter. How can I be true under such circumstances?

SYDNEY SMITH.

225.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

October 1, 1824.

My dear Davenport,

I am very sorry there should be any mistake as to the day; but in the negotiation between the higher powers—Mrs Davenport and Mrs Sydney—the day mentioned was from the 15th to dinner, till the morning of the 17th. You will smile at this precision; but I find, from long experience, that I am never so well received, as when I state to my host the brief duration of his sorrows and embarrassments. Upon the same principle, young speakers conciliate favour by declaring they do not mean to detain the House a long time.

Great expectations are formed of your speech. The report is, that you apostrophise the shades of Hampden and Brutus. —— has a beautiful passage on the effects of freedom upon calico. Sir John Stanley will take that opportunity of refuting Locke and Malebranche; it will be a great day. J—— W—— will speak of economy from the epergne.

SYDNEY SMITH.

226.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Oct. 23, 1824.

'My dear Lady Grey,

I am just come from a visit to Lord Fitzwilliam, that best of old noblemen! I was never there before. Nothing could exceed his kindness and civility. The author of the "Paradise Lost" was there also. I am surprised that I had heard so little of the magnificence of Wentworth House. It is one of the finest buildings I ever saw—twice as great a front as Castle Howard! And how magnificent is the hall!

I took Fouché's Memoirs for genuine; but I have nothing to refer to but ignorant impressions.

Dear Lady M——! I have more tenderness for Lady M—— than it would be ecclesiastical to own; but don't mention it to Lord Grey, who is fond of throwing a ridicule upon the cloth. In the meantime, Lady M—— is the perfection of all that is agreeable and pleasant in society.

I have sent to Bishop Doyle a list of errors commonly and unjustly imputed to the Catholics, and more and more believed for want of proper contradiction, requesting him to publish and circulate a denial of them signed by the Roman Catholic hierarchy. It would be a very useful paper for general circulation. He writes word it shall be done. God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

SYDNEY SMITH.

227.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 10, 1824.

My dear Jeffrey,

I will send you a sheet for this number upon allowing Counsel for Prisoners in cases of Felony. Your review of the Bumpists destroys them, but it is tremendously long for such a subject. I cannot tell what the Scotch market may require, but Bumpology has always been treated with great contempt among men of sense in England, and the machinery you have employed for its destruction will excite surprise; though everybody must admit it is extremely well done.

A good article upon the Church of England, and upon the Court of France, and in general a very good number. Ever, my dear Jeffrey, most sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

228.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

November, 1824.

My dear Davenport,

Political economy has become in the hands of Malthus and Ricardo, a school of metaphysics. All seem agreed what is to be done; the contention is, how the subject is to be divided and defined. Meddle with no such matters. Write the lives of the principal Italian poets, of about the same length as Macdiarmid's "Lives," mingling criticism and translation with biography: this is the task I assign you.

The Berrys are slowly rising in this part of the world; I hear of them eighty miles off, and their track begins to be pointed out. People are out on the hills with their glasses. I have written to ask them to Foston. Our visit succeeded very well at Knowsley. The singing of the children was admired, and we all found *Derbus* and *Derbe* very kind and attentive. What principally struck me was the magnificence of the dining-room, and the goodness of heart both of the master and mistress;—to which add, the ugliness of the country!

I am sorry to hear you are likely to have the gout again. Let it be a comfort to you to reflect, that I, who have no gout, have not an acre of land upon the face of the earth.

SYDNEY SMITH.

No Roman vase: we are not worthy—it is out of our line. I have read over your letter again. If the object in writing essays on political economy is to amuse yourself, of course, there can be no objection; but my opinion is (and I will never deceive in literary matters) you will do the other *much better*. If you have a mind for a frolic over the mountains, you know how glad I shall be to see you.

229.] TO LORD CREWE.

About 1824.

Dear Lord Crewe,

I cannot help writing a line to thank you for your obliging note. I hope one day or other (wind and weather permitting) to pay my respects to Lady Crewe and you, at Crewe Hall, of goodly exterior, and, like a York pie, at this season filled with agreeable and interesting contents.

To Mr and Mrs Cunliffe my kind remembrances, if you please. I cannot trust myself with a message to Mrs Hopwood, but shall be very much obliged to your Lordship to frame one, suitable to my

profession, worthy of its object, and not forgetful of my feelings; let it be clerical, elevated, and tender.

P——'s single turnips turned out extremely well; he is about to publish a tract "On the Effect of Solitude on Vegetables."

I remain, dear Lord Crewe, very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

230.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Foston, July 14, 1825.

. . . . . .

We stayed two days with Lord Essex, and were delighted with Cashiobury. I think you and I might catch some fish there next summer. He darkens his house too much with verandahs, and there are no hot luncheons; in return, he is affable, open-hearted, unaffected, and good-humoured in the highest degree. I am sorry I never went there before. I will always go in future when I can, and when I am asked.

The northern world is profoundly peaceful and prosperous; the reverse of everything we have prophesied in the Edinburgh Review for twenty years.

SYDNEY SMITH.

231.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

August 25, 1825.

. . . . . .

—— has been extremely well received, and is much liked. His nature is fine: he wants ease, which will come, and indiscretion, which will never come. I had a visit from the Earl of —— to my great surprise. I must do him the justice to say that nothing could be more agreeable and more amiable. To him succeeded some Genevese philosophers; not bad in the country, where there is much time and few people, but they would not do in London.

My sermon, which I send you, was printed at the request of the English Catholic Committee.

I do not like Madame Bertin: I suspect all such books. You will read a review of mine, of Bentham's "Fallacies," in the next Edinburgh Review.

The general report here is, that —— is to marry the King of Prussia. I call it rather an ambitious than a happy match. It will neither please Lord Holland, nor Allen, nor Whishaw.

Your sincere and affectionate

SYDNEY SMITH.

232.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Newcastle, Oct. 4, 1825.

Dear Lady Grey,

I have been on a visit to Brougham, where I met Mackintosh. We had a loyal week, and spoke respectfully of all existing authorities. A pretty place; Brougham very pleasant; Mackintosh much improved in health. Mrs Brougham is a very fine old lady, whom I took to very much.

From Brougham I went to Howard of Corby,—an excellent man, believing in the Pope; and from thence I proceeded to Ord's, over the most heaven-forgotten country I ever saw. Ord lives in this very beautiful, inaccessible place at the end of the world, very comfortably.

I now write from a vile inn at Newcastle, where I can get neither beef, veal, nor sealing-wax.

I have a great prejudice against soldiers, but thought Mr —— agreeable, and with a good deal of humour. I am very much pleased that the Howards intend to live on at Castle Howard: they are very excellent people, and I am most fortunate in having such neighbours.

S. S.

233.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, 1825.

My dear Jeffrey,

I addressed a letter to you ten days since, mentioning some subjects which, if agreeable to you, I would discuss in the Edinburgh Review. I know the value and importance of your time enough to make me sorry to intrude upon you again; but the printer, you know, is imperious in his demands, and limited in his time. Will you excuse me for requesting as early an answer as you can? It must be to you, as I am sure it is to me, a real pleasure to see so many improvements taking place, and so many abuses destroyed; —abuses upon which you, with cannon and mortars, and I with sparrow-shot, have been playing for so many years.

Mrs Sydney always sends you reproaches for not coming to see her as you pass and repass; but I always reply to her, that the loadstone has no right to reproach the needle for not coming from a certain distance. The answer of the needle is, "Attract me, and I will come; I am passive." "Alas! it is beyond my power," says the magnet. "Then don't blame me," says the needle.

SYDNEY SMITH.

234.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

January, 1826.

My dear Lady Grey,

Terrible work in Yorkshire with the Pope! I fight with the beasts at Ephesus every day!

I hope you have lost no money by the failures all around you. I have been very fortunate. In future I mean to keep my money in a hole in the garden.

This week I publish a pamphlet on the Catholic question, with my name to it. There is such an uproar here, that I think it is gallant, and becoming a friend of Lord Grey's (if he will forgive the presumption of my giving myself that appellation), to turn out and take a part in the affray. I would send you a copy, but it would cost you three times as much as to buy it. But the best way is neither to buy nor receive it. What a detestable subject!—stale, threadbare, and exhausted; but ancient errors cannot be met with fresh refutations.

They say it is very cold, but I am in a perfectly warm house; and when I go out, am in a perfectly warm great-coat: the seasons are nothing to me.

I wish Lord Howick would come and see me, as he passes and repasses: I am afraid he doubts of my Whig principles, and thinks I am not for the people. You know that Dr Willis opposes Beaumont for the county of Northumberland. The sheriff has provided himself with a strait waistcoat.

How did you like Lord Morpeth's answer? It seems to me modest, liberal, and rational. It is very generally approved here. It is something, that a young man of his station has taken the oaths to the good cause.

Pray tell all your family the last person burnt in England for religion was Weightman, at Lichfield, by the Protestant Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, in the reign of James the First, 1612. God save the King!

From your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

235.] TO THE EARL GREY.

February 16, 1826.

My dear Lord Grey,

There appeared, in the "Monthly Magazine" (January), and was thence copied into several papers, "*A Letter of Advice to the Clergy, by the Rev. Sydney Smith.*" It is a mere forgery; and I have ascertained that the author is a Mr Nathaniel Ogle, of

Southampton. May I beg the favour of you to inform me who Mr Nathaniel Ogle is? I thought Nat Ogle, the eldest son of the Dean, had been dead, and that the estate had passed to John. If you know anything of this gentleman, I should be obliged to you to inform me, and also to send me the address of the Rev. Henry Ogle. Any attack of wit or argument is fair; but to publish letters in another man's name is *contra bonos mores*, and cannot be allowed. I hope you are well, and bring with you to town a lady as well as yourself.

I have published a pamphlet in favour of the Pope, with my name, which I would send, but that it would cost you more than its price, being above weight, and *sine pondere:* but I cannot help writing; *facit indignatio versus.* Most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

236.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, Feb. 28, 1826.

My dear Jeffrey,

I can make nothing of Craniology, for this reason: they are taking many different species of the same propensity, and giving to them each a bump. Now I believe that if nature meant to give any bumps at all, it must have been to the genus, and not to the species and varieties; because the human skull could not contain outward sings of a tenth part of the various methods in which any propensity may act. But to state what are original propensities, and to trace out the family or genealogy of each, is a task requiring great length, patience, and metaphysical acuteness; and Combe's book is too respectably done to be taken by storm.

Instead of this, I will send you, as you seem pressed, the review of "Granby," a novel of great merit. Stop me, by return of post, if this book is engaged, and believe me always most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

237.] TO —— FLETCHER, ESQ.

York, March 25, 1826.

My dear Sir,

I am truly glad that any effort of mine in the cause of liberality and toleration meets with your approbation. You have lived a life of honour and honesty, truckling to no man, and disguising no opinion you entertained. I think myself much honoured by your praise. I will take care you have a copy of my speech as soon as I

return to Foston from York, where I am now staying for a short course of noise, bad air, and dirt.

My letter is by this time nearly out of print: a thousand copies have disappeared, and I am printing another thousand; and I will take care you have one *from the author*, as a mark of his sincere regard and respect.

God bless you, my dear Sir! I wish you a fertile garden, a warm summer, limbs without pain, and a tranquil mind. The remembrance of an honourable and useful life you have secured for yourself already. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

238.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Ship Inn, Dover, April* 14, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I have arrived safely at Dover, and shall cross to-morrow in the Government packet. You must direct to me at Messrs Laffitte and Co., Paris. You need only write once a week, except in case of accidents; I shall write, as I told you, every day. I think, *when we go to Paris*, I shall set off in the steamboat from London.

The road from London to Dover is very beautiful. I am much pleased with Dover. They have sunk a deep shaft in the cliff, and made a staircase, by which the top of the cliff is reached with great ease; or at least what they call great ease, which means the loss of about a pound of liquid flesh, and as much puffing and blowing as would grind a bushel of wheat. The view from the cliff, I need not tell you, is magnificent.

I dare say a number of acquaintances will turn up. You shall have an exact account of the contents of the steam-packet. God bless you all!

S. S.

* "These letters, perhaps, are not of sufficient interest to be worthy of general attention. Yet they show the pleasure he took in imparting to the absent the daily incidents occurring to him in a new place, and the promise gratuitously given, *and never once departed from*, that he would write every day. He well knew how eagerly these letters would be read at home. The looking at everything with a view to the enjoyment he should have in taking his family abroad at some future time,—his mindfulness of all the little commissions given him,—show him to have been as full of unostentatious domestic virtue, as he was conspicuous for that which is deemed greater and nobler.—C. A. S."—*Note to the Letters from Paris, by Mrs Sydney Smith.*

The brief extracts which have been selected from the letters written by Mr Sydney Smith to his wife, during his first visit to Paris, are not inserted for their brilliancy, nor because they inform us of anything about Paris with which we are not familiar. I think them precious, as showing his fresh and open sense of enjoyment, and his eager desire to share it with his family. The words in italics were underlined in the copies made by Mrs Sydney, and so I have left them: I would not rob them of the emphasis given to them by her proud and grateful affection.—ED.

239.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Calais, April 15, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

am writing from a superb bedroom and dressing-room, at Dessein's. I wanted to order dinner, and a very long *carte*, of which I understood nothing, was given me; so I ordered "Potage aux choux" (God knows what it is), "Pommes de terre au naturel," and "Veau au naturel." I am afraid I shall have a fortune to pay for it.

I have been walking all about Calais, and am quite delighted with it. It contains about half the population of York. What pleases me, is the taste and ingenuity displayed in the shops, and the good manners and politeness of the people. Such is the state of manners, that you appear almost to have quitted a land of barbarians.

I wish you could see me, with my wood fire, and my little bedroom, and fine sitting-room. My baggage has passed the Custom-house without any difficulty; therefore, so far, my journey has answered perfectly.

You shall all see France; I am resolved upon that. God bless you all.

S. S.

240.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris: no date.

Dearest Wife,

My dinner at Calais was superb; I never ate so good a dinner, nor was in so good an hotel; but I paid dear. I amused myself that evening with walking about the streets of Calais, which pleased me exceedingly. It is quite another world, and full of the greatest entertainment. *I most sincerely hope, one day or another, to conduct you all over it; the thought of doing so is one of my greatest pleasures in travelling.* I was struck immediately with, and have continued to notice ever since, the extreme propriety and civility of everybody, even the lowest person; I have not seen a cobbler who is not better bred than an English gentleman. I slept well on a charming bed, after having drunk much better tea than I could have met with in England.

I found the inns excellent everywhere on the road, and the cookery admirable. The agriculture appeared to me extremely good; the instruments very clumsy, and the sheep, cows, and pigs miserable. The horses admirable for agriculture and seven miles an hour. At Paris I drove to several hotels, and could not get ad-

mission; at last I found rooms at the Hôtel D'Orvilliers. I dined in a café more superb than anything we have an idea of in the way of coffee-house, and I send you my bill. A dinner like this would have cost thirty shillings in London. At this coffee-house I was accosted by Binda, who was dining there. My dinner was not good, for, not knowing what to choose, and not understanding the language of the kitchen, I chose the first thing upon the list, and chose badly; it is reckoned the best coffee-house in Paris.

In the morning I changed my lodgings to the Hôtel Virginie, Rue St Honoré, No. 350. My sitting-room is superb; my bed-room, close to it, very good; there is a balcony which looks upon the street,—as busy as Cheapside; in short, I am as comfortably lodged as possible; I pay at the rate of £2, 2*s.* per week. I am exceedingly pleased with everything I have seen at the hotel, *and it will be, I think, here we shall lodge.* God bless you all!

SYDNEY SMITH.

241.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 19, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

. . . . . .

I called on the Duke of Bedford, who took me for *Sir* Sidney Smith, and refused me; I met him afterwards in the street.

I have bought a coat-of-arms on a seal for six shillings, which will hereafter be the coat-of-arms of the family; this letter is sealed with it.*

I called upon Dumont, who says that our hospitality to his friends has made us very popular at Geneva, and that M. Chauvet gave a very entertaining account of us.

Paris is very badly lighted at nights, and the want of a trottoir is a very great evil. The equipages are much less splendid and less numerous than in England. The Champs Elysées are very poor and bad; but, for the two towns, in spite of all these inconveniences, believe me, there is not the smallest possibility of a comparison; Regent Street is a perfect misery, compared with the finest parts of Paris. I think, in general, that the display of the shops is finer here than in London.

Of course my opinions, from my imperfect information, are likely to change every day; but at present I am inclined to think that I ought to have gone, and *that we will go*, to the Boulevards.

There are no table-cloths in the coffee-houses; this annoys me; (at least none for breakfast.) I am very well; still a little heated

* *Vide* Memoir, Chapter VIII.

with the journey. I have written regularly every day. God bless you all!

SYDNEY SMITH.

April 20.

The Duke of Bedford wrote me a note, saying there had been some mistake on the day I called,—that I had been mistaken for my namesake,—"*as much unlike you as possible.*" This note was carried to *Sir* Sydney, who opened it, read it, and returned it to me, with an apology for his indiscretion, offering to take me to some shows, and begging we might be acquainted.

S. S.

242.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 21, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I breakfasted yesterday with Miss Fox and Miss Vernon. I met an ancient member of the National Assembly—a M. Girardin, a sensible, agreeable man, who gave me an introduction to-day to the Assembly, of which I mean to avail myself.

I dined with Lord Holland; there was at table Barras, the ex-Director, in whose countenance I immediately discovered all the signs of blood and cruelty which distinguished his conduct. I found out, however, at the end of dinner, that it was not Barras, but M. de Barante, an historian and man of letters, who, I believe, has never killed anything greater than a flea. The Duke de Broglie was there; I am to breakfast with him to-morrow. In the afternoon came Casimir Perrier, one of the best speakers in the Assembly, and Dupin, a lawyer. I saw young Abercromby here, the Secretary of Legation.

Lady Granville has invited me to her ball, which is to be, as they say, very splendid.

I have hired a *laquais de place*, who abridges my labour, saves my time, and therefore my money. I am assailed by visitants, particularly by Sir Sydney Smith, who is delighted with my letter to him, and shows it about everywhere.

God bless you all!

S. S.

243.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 22, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

From Montmartre there is a noble panorama of Paris. From

thence I went to the Assembly of Deputies,—a dark, disagreeable hall. I was placed so far from them that I could not hear. They got up and read their speeches, and read them like very bad parsons. I dined at seven o'clock at the Ambassador's; Miss Fox carried me there. The company consisted of Lord and Lady Granville, Lady Hardy (Sir Charles Hardy's lady), Mr and Mrs Ellis, Lady C. Wortley, Mr Sneyd, Mr Abercromby, and two or three attachés; and in the afternoon came a profusion of French duchesses,—in general very good-looking, well-dressed people, with more form and ceremony than belongs to English duchesses. The house was less splendid than I expected, though I fancy I did not see the state apartments. There is an assembly there this morning, to see the greenhouses and gardens, to which I am invited: you know my botanic skill—it will be called into action this morning; to-morrow I am going to a *déjeûner à la fourchette* with the Duke de Broglie.

I have renewed my acquaintance with young ——. There is something in him, but he does not know how little it is; he is much admired as a beauty.

God bless you all! I have written every day.

S. S.

244.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 23, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I went yesterday with Dumont to breakfast with the Duke de Broglie. The company consisted of the Duke, the Duchess, the tutor, young Rocca, M. de Staël, brother to the Duchess, and the children. The Duke seems to be a very amiable, sensible man. He and M. de Staël are going to make a tour, and I think will come to see us in Yorkshire.

After breakfast I went to see the palace of the Duke of Orléans. The pictures are numerous, but principally of the French school, and not good; the rooms in which there are no pictures are most magnificent; in short, *magnificence* must be scratched out of our dictionary. I then went to a *déjeûner à la fourchette* at the Ambassador's, where there was a numerous assembly of French and English; it was a very pretty sight in a very pretty garden.

I dined with Lord Bath. In the evening we went to see Mdlle. Mars, the great French actress. Her *forte* is comedy: she seems to excel in such parts as Mrs Jordan excelled in, and has her sweetness of voice. She is very old and ugly; she excels also in genteel comedy, as Miss Farren did. I certainly think her a very considerable actress.

After the play I went to Lady Holland's, where was Humboldt, the great traveller,—a lively, pleasant, talkative man.

I like M. Gallois very much; he is a truly benevolent, amiable man. I have not yet had a visit from the hero Sir Sidney Smith; it is his business to call upon me, and I am not anxious to make acquaintance with my countryman.

God bless you! I have written every day, but have received no letters!

S. S.

245.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 27, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

Yesterday was a very bad, draggling day, and Paris is not pleasant at such a time. I went to the King's Library, containing four hundred thousand volumes; they are lent out, even the manuscripts, and, I am afraid, sometimes lost and stolen. It is an enormous library, but nothing to strike the eye. I then saw the Palais du Prince de Condé, which is not worth seeing.

I dined with Lord Holland, who is better. The famous Cuvier was there, and in the evening came Prince Talleyrand, who renewed his acquaintance with me, and inquired very kindly for my brother. I mean to call upon him. The French manners are quite opposite to ours: the stranger is introduced, and I find he calls upon the native first. This is very singular, and, I think, contrary to reason.

In the evening I went to Lady Granville's ball; nothing could be more superb. It is by all accounts the first house in Paris. I met there crowds of English. Madame de Bourke, the widow of the late Danish Ambassador, renewed her acquaintance with me. The prettiest girl in the room was Miss Rumbold, the daughter-in-law of Sir Sidney Smith.

The French Government are behaving very foolishly, flinging themselves into the arms of the Jesuits; making processions through the streets, of twelve hundred priests, with the King and Royal Family at their head; disgusting the people, and laying the foundation of another revolution, which seems to me (if this man* lives) to be inevitable. God bless you!

S. S.

246.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 28, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

Yesterday was a miserable day; it rained in torrents from morn-

* Charles X.

ing to night. I employed the morning in visiting in a hackney-coach. It is curious to see in what little apartments a French *savant* lives; you find him at his books, covered with snuff, with a little dog that bites your legs.

I had no invitation to dinner, so dined by myself at a coffee-house. I improve in my knowledge of Paris cookery. There were four English ladies dining in the public coffee-house,—very well-bred women. In the evening I received an invitation from Mrs H. S—— to go with her and her son to the Opera. I went, and was pleased with the gaiety of the house; there is no ballet, and at present no good singer. The house was full of English, who talk loud, and seem to care little for other people; this is their characteristic, and a very brutal and barbarous distinction it is. After the Opera, I went to drink tea with Mrs S——, and so ended my day.

This morning it is snowing. I am going to breakfast with the Duke de Broglie. God bless you all!

S. S.

247.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, April 29, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

Horrible weather again to-day; snowing and raining all day. I went to breakfast with the Duke de Broglie. They are virtuous, sensible people, but give breakfasts without a table-cloth!

I saw the Palace of the Luxembourg and the House of Peers; bad pictures, fine gardens, and the noblest staircase in Paris. The Luxembourg gardens are very fine for the French style of gardening, which I confess I like very much. I am going to-morrow with Mr Sneyd to St Cloud and Meudon. A fortnight is sufficient for any man to see Paris perfectly, if he meets with no friends and is diligent.

S. S.

248.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, May 1, 1826.

Saturday was again a horrible day. I have been badly advised about the time of year: the month of May is the time. *We will set off from Yorkshire the 1st of May.*

I dined with Talleyrand; his cook is said to be the best in Paris. The Duke of Bedford took me there. He was very civil (Talleyrand, I mean), as was his niece, the Duchess de Dino. I sat near Mr Montron, the Luttrell of Paris, a very witty, agreeable man,

with whom I made great friends. In the afternoon I went to Lady Grantham's, where was a splendid assembly. I amused myself very much, and stayed till twelve o'clock. I renewed my acquaintance with Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian Ambassador, a very sensible, agreeable man.

S. S.

249.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

Paris, May 4, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I was engaged all yesterday in seeing the procession. The King laid the first stone of a statue to Louis XVI. in the Place de Louis XV. The procession passed under my window, where were Miss Fox, Miss Vernon, Lady Holland, and others. There were about twelve hundred priests, four cardinals, a piece of the real Cross, and one of the nails, carried under a canopy upon a velvet cushion; the King, the Marshals, the House of Peers, and the House of Commons following. A more absurd, disgraceful, and ridiculous, or a finer, sight, I never saw. The Bourbons are too foolish and too absurd; nothing can keep them on the throne.

The season is very cold; it is a decided east wind to-day. I am fully a month too soon; the foliage is not half out.

You know Mrs H. S——. On Sunday, when I preached, she sat near Sir Sidney Smith; he commended the sermon very much. "Yes," said Mrs S——, "I think it should make you proud of your name!" You may easily guess how this was relished.

I am a good deal alarmed by these riots in England, because I do not know how they are to end. There is a want of work; when will the demand for manufacturing labour revive? How is it possible to support such a population in idleness?

The King is grown dreadfully old since I dined with him at the Duke of Buccleuch's, in Scotland; I should not have known him again. There are some hopes of the Dauphin and of the Duchess d'Angoulême. If some change does not soon take place, there will be a revolution. God bless you all!

S. S.

250.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

May 5, 1826.

Dearest Kate,

I went yesterday to the Cimetière du Père la Chaise. This is a large burying-ground of two hundred acres, out of Paris. The

tombs are placed in little gardens by the relations, and covered with flowers. You see people mourning and weeping over the graves of their friends. I was much pleased and affected with it.

From thence I went to the Castle of Vincennes, two or three miles from Paris. It was here that the Duke d'Enghien was shot by order of Buonaparte. A monument, in very bad taste, is erected to his memory in the chapel. The castle is not inhabited, but by artillerymen; it is a sort of bad Woolwich. The park is immense; at first they would not let me in, but a sergeant of artillery, who was showing it to his friends, admitted me to be of the party. It is not however worth seeing,—only worth driving round.

I went to dine with Mr and Mrs Greathed. They gave me a very good dinner, particularly a *filet de bœuf piqué* of admirable flavour and contrivance. There was a gentleman, whose name I could not learn, nor ascertain his nature; and a very agreeable, clever woman, by the name of Quesnel, the widow of Holcroft, who writes for the stage here; she has six children by her first, and six by her second husband, and she says she is called at her hotel *la dame aux enfans!* God bless you all!

S. S.

251.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

May 7, 1826.

I passed three hours yesterday at the police, getting my passport. I think I have nearly seen all my sights. I have seen Sismondi and Madame Sismondi this morning; he is an energetic and sensible old man. My two reviews are very much read, and praised here for there fun; I read them the other night, and they made me laugh a good deal.

The Parisians are very fond of adorning their public fountains: sometimes water pours forth from a rock, sometimes trickles from the jaws of a serpent. The dull and prosaic English turn a brass cock, or pull out a plug! What a nation!

I have bought the "Cuisinier Bourgeois." I think we may attempt one or two dishes. We shall not be perfect at first, but such an object will ensure and justify perseverance. I meant, when first I came, to have bought all Paris: but, finding that difficult, I have, for myself, only spent six shillings!

S. S.

252.] TO MRS SYDNEY SMITH.

London, Friday.

Dearest Kate,

I set off at nine o'clock on Tuesday in the diligence, with a French lady and her father, who has an estate near Calais. I found him a sensible man, with that propensity which the French have for explaining things which do not require explanation. He explained to me, for instance, what he did when he found coffee too strong; he put water in it! He explained how blind people found their way in Paris,—by tapping upon the wall with a stick; what he principally endeavoured to make clear to me was, how they knew when they were come to a crossing;—it was when there was no longer a wall to strike against with their stick! I expressed my thorough comprehension of these means used by blind men, and he paid me many compliments upon my quickness. I had fine weather for my journey, and arrived at Calais at four o'clock on Wednesday. I went to Quilliac's Hotel, which I found less good and less dear than that of Dessein.

I went to the play the day before I came away, and saw Talma. He is certainly a very fine actor, making due allowance for the vehemence and gesticulation of the French.

What has struck me most is the extraordinary beauty of the French papers. I have bought enough to paper your room for £2, 10*s.*; the duty upon it was £5; total, £7, 10*s.*, about as cheap as English paper at a shilling a yard; but I see no such patterns in England.

We sailed at about eleven o'clock, and had a beautiful passage of less than three hours. A sea-voyage produces a little terror, some surprise, great admiration, much cold, much *ennui*, and, where there is no sickness, much hunger. I got my things through the Custom-house here before six o'clock, and travelled all night to London, with a Flemish baron, his lady, and child, and a French physician's wife. I am very little fatigued. And so ends my journey to France, which has given me much pleasure and amusement. God bless you all!

S. S.

253.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Foston, July, 1826.

Dear Jeffrey,

Will you allow me to remind you that it is above three weeks since I asked you whether I might write an article upon licensing

ale-houses,—a great English subject? I should take it as a favour if you would answer these queries as soon as you can, by a single word, as follows:—

Ale-houses—Yes.
Ale-houses—No.

The impediment to the under-workmen is serious, when the master will not tell them what they are to do. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

254.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

No date.

My dear Lady Holland,

I was very glad to hear you were so well as to despise the south of France, and remain at Paris.

The Duke of Devonshire told me everything would go on as usual at Castle Howard. Lord Morpeth is very much liked wherever he has presented himself, and appears to be sure of his election. The Protestants are very angry that four Papists should be elected, but they have not as yet brought forward any Martin Luther against us.

Little Du Cane has been here; a very amiable pleasing person. I shall ask —— for his defects; they are not apparent at a first acquaintance. Lord —— (innocent lamb!) has been distributing cake and wine to the little children of ——, and presiding at the Bible Society. If he take to benevolence, he will be the happier for it.

Have you read "Matilda"? If you have, will you not tell me what you think of it? You are as cautious as Whishaw. I mentioned to Lord Normanby that it was the book selected as a victim for the next number of the Edinburgh Review, and that my brethren had complimented me with the knife. Lady Normanby gave a loud shriek!

All the branches of the Howards are at Castle Howard. The music went off very well; £20,500 was collected. I did not go once. Music for such a length of time (unless under sentence of a jury) I will not submit to. What pleasure is there in pleasure, if quantity is not attended to as well as quality? I know nothing more agreeable than a dinner at Holland House; but it must not begin at ten in the morning and last till six. I should be incapable for the last four hours of laughing at Lord Holland's jokes, eating Raffaelle's cakes or repelling Mr Allen's attacks upon the Church.

SYDNEY SMITH.

255.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

August 8, 1826.

. . . . . .

It struck me last night, as I was lying in bed, that Mackintosh, if he were to write on pepper, would thus describe it—

"Pepper may philosophically be described as a dusty and highly pulverised seed of an oriental fruit; an article rather of condiment than diet, which, dispersed lightly over the surface of food with no other rule than the caprice of the consumer, communicates pleasure, rather than affords nutrition; and, by adding a tropical flavour to the gross and succulent viands of the North, approximates the different regions of the earth, explains the objects of commerce, and justifies the industry of man."

I am very glad to hear from Miss Vernon, that you are all so well, and that you are enjoying yourselves so much at Ampthill.

S. S.

256.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, September, 1826.

My dear Lady Grey,

We have had Mr Whishaw and Mr Jeffrey here, and a number of very sensible, agreeable men, coming up to the imperfect idea I am able to form of good society. You have had a brisk time of it at Howick, and all the organs of combativeness have been called into action. I hope you are cooling. We have been, ever since I have been here, in the horror of elections—each party acting and thinking as if the salvation of several planets depended upon the adoption of Mr Johnson and the rejection of Mr Jackson.

I think it is the hot weather which has agreed with you; it is quite certain that it has not agreed with me. I never suffered so much from any species of weather; but I am, you know, of the family of Falstaff.

Pray make all my friends (meaning by that expression your daughters) study languages on the Hamiltonian method.

I hope you found Howick in high beauty. It must have been an affecting meeting. You left it under the conviction that you would see it no more, though I told you all the time you would live to be eighty.

Pray read Agar Ellis's "Iron Mask," not so much for that question, though it is not devoid of curiosity, as to remark the horrible atrocities perpetrated under absolute monarchies; and to justify and extol Lord Grey, and at the humblest distance, Sydney

Smith and other men, who, according to their station in life and the different talents given them, have defended liberty.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

From your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

257.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

London, Thursday, 1826.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have written to Maltby, and stated (in order to accumulate motives) that you are a considerable scholar, but shy, and must be pressed a good deal before you develop such-like knowledge; particularly, that you have peculiar opinions about the preterpluperfect tense; and this, I know, will bring him directly, for that tense has always occasioned him much uneasiness, though he has appeared to the world cheerful and serene.

But how little we know of what passes in each other's minds! Ever yours,

S. S.

258.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Foston, Nov. 9, 1826.

Dear Allen,

Pray tell me something about Lord and Lady Holland, as it is several centuries since I have seen them. I was in the same house in Cheshire with ——, but he was too ill to see me; extreme depression of spirits seems to be his complaint, an evil of which I have a full comprehension; Mrs —— seems to be really alarmed about him. Have you finished your squabbles with Lingard? The Catholics are outrageous with you, and I have heard some of the most violent express a doubt whether you are quite an orthodox member of the Church of England.

I never saw Lord Carlisle looking so well. Is not happiness good for the gout? I think that remedy is at work upon him. I cannot say how agreeable their neighbourhood is to me. I am very glad to see Mackintosh is really at work upon his history: it will immortalise him, and make Ampthill classical from recollections.

I think of going to Edinburgh in the spring with my family, on a visit to Jeffrey, who was with us in the summer. Health and respect, dear Allen! Prosperity to the Church, and power to the clergy!

Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

We have seen a good deal of old Whishaw this summer: he is as pleasant as he is wise and honest. He has character enough to make him well received if he were dull, and wit enough to make him popular if he were a rogue.

259.] TO EDWARD DAVENPORT, ESQ.

December 26, 1826.

Dear Davenport,

I wish you would turn your talents and activity to oppose this odious war. There is no such thing as a "just war," or, at least, as a *wise* war; at all events, this is not one. Pray be pacific. I see you have broken the ice in the House of Commons. I shall be curious to hear your account of your feelings, of what colour the human creatures looked who surrounded you, and how the candles and Speaker appeared. We *must* have a small massacre of magistrates; nothing else will do. The gentleman you have mentioned shall be among the first.

I wish you had added a word of the nature and condition of my old friend Mrs H——: breeding, of course; at least, the *onus probandi* is with her.

We hear nothing here but of distress bazaars, and the high price of hay. I am not without alarm as to the state of the country: the manufacturing distress has lasted too long.

For God's sake, open upon the Chancery. On this subject there can be no excess of vituperation and severity. Advocate also free trade in ale and ale-houses. Respect the Church, and believe that the insignificant member of it who now addresses you is most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

260.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

Howick, February, 1827.

My dear Jeffrey,

It appears there is a great probability of war with Spain, and therefore with France. If the majority had been in favour of the Catholics, Peel and Lord Bathurst had settled to resign. Of this there is no doubt, Lord Liverpool regains neither speech nor reason, only a little power of locomotion; his resignation has been given in by his friends. The King has taken the most decided part against the Catholics, and begs he may never more be importuned respecting a question which harasses his conscience; he pleads even his Coronation Oath.

There is a great effort made by the High Tories to fling Canning overboard, but Peel is averse to try the experiment. But for this, it is supposed he would be dismissed. The alternative, I take to be, either Peel, or Canning, bound hand, foot, and tongue. Lord Wellington openly declares Canning to be, from his indiscretion, unfit for office.

I have not heard the slightest rumours of Lord Grey or Lord Lansdowne.

You affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

261.] TO MRS FLETCHER.

York, March, 1827.

My dear Madam,

Many thanks for your obliging note, and for the loan of the books. I really must persevere in my judgment of Tone's conduct. His life had been spared by the Irish Government, who are generous enough to let him off with no other condition than that of expatriation; and the moment their generosity has set him free, he plots their destruction by calling in a foreign enemy. I *must* hold this to be bad morals. A tone of vulgarity pervades the whole narrative; yet, if the first error in morals be overlooked, there is devotion, heroism, courage, and perseverance in his conduct.

My sermons were little or nothing; their excellence is in your own desire to excel, and in your disposition to be pleased.

Politics, domestic and foreign, are very discouraging; Jesuits abroad—Turks in Greece—No-Poperists in England! A panting to burn B; B fuming to roast C; C miserable that he cannot reduce D to ashes; and D consigning to eternal perdition the three first letters of the alphabet.

Health and respect!

SYDNEY SMITH.

262.] TO THE EARL GREY.

March 24, 1827.

My dear Lord,

. . . . . .

It would have some effect, if the Catholics were to admit the expediency of excluding every member from voting on the affairs of the Church, who would not take the declaration against Transubstantiation. The common query is, Are they to assist in regulating the affairs of *our* Church, who will not permit us to meddle with *their* Church?

I remain, my dear Lord, with our kind regards, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

263.] *To the Translator of Voltaire's "Charles XII."*

Foston, York, April 24, 1827.

Madam,*

I am extremely obliged by the honour you have done me in sending me your translation of "Charles XII." I have no reason to alter my opinion expressed in the Edinburgh Review; all you have written confirms to me the benefit of the double translation. Anything that can be done to alleviate the wretchedness of learning languages, is of the highest public importance. I will look over your translation; and, if anything occurs to me deserving of your consideration, will write to you through the medium of your publishers. I remain, Madam, your well-wisher and obedient servant,

SYDNEY SMITH.

264.] TO THE DEAN OF CHESTER.

Foston, June 28, 1827.

My dear Sir,

I can only say, that if any man asked me whether I was the author of an anonymous publication, *in which his character was attacked*, that I would immediately (if I *were* the author) own myself to be so, and publish his defence with my own assent to, or dissent from it, accompanied by my reasons; and, if I thought I had done wrong, I would apologise. This is the plain course; and this course I dare say —— (if he be the author) will pursue. I shall have occasion to write to him and Jeffrey soon, and will state to them the same opinions I have stated to you.

As to the old quarrel with the Edinburgh Review, and who was right and who was wrong, you will, I am sure, have the goodness to excuse me for not saying anything on the subject; twenty years have elapsed, and the thing is dead and gone. You and I, like wise and respectable men, have shaken hands, and so ends the matter.

I have not read your sermon. I received a letter from London about the time it was published, taking a view of it as a decided anti-Catholic sermon, and desiring me to review it. I immediately declined doing so; and as I had the wisdom to keep out of the origi-

* About the time at which this letter was written, public attention had been drawn to the so-called Hamiltonian System of interlinear translation, by an article in the Edinburgh Review. The book here referred to was translated anonymously by the Editor of these Letters; and as this toilsome work was undertaken partly in consequence of the eulogy of the system contained in that article, a copy was sent to the author of it. It was not till long afterwards that he knew to whom his letter was addressed.—Ed.

nal war, I have a fair right to remain neutral in the secondary dispute, and must therefore deny myself the pleasure I should derive from any production of yours.

You have done quite right in writing to me. You may depend upon it I will exhort —— (if he be the author) to reconsider his remarks, and to do you all the justice he conscientiously can. I have written nothing whatever in the approaching number of the Edinburgh Review.

Upon looking over your letter again carefully, I perceive you do not contend that your sermon, to a certain extent, is not anti-Catholic, but that you have always been anti-Catholic to the same extent; if so, this is, of course, a perfect answer to the charge of inconsistency. I have unfortunately seen so little of you for many years past, that I can have no knowledge of your opinions; but I had formed a loose notion that you had been a decided friend to Catholic Emancipation, and it certainly would have surprised me (as it seems to have surprised ——) to have read from you a sermon so anti-Catholic as you represent yours to be. I thought I had heard that you were almost alone in the Convocation defending the Catholics. But these are mere rumours of the streets; I have no kind of authority for them.

I write in haste; pray construe my letter in the spirit of kindness and goodwill, or if you doubt me, or whether you doubt me or not, come to Foston and try me. Yours, dear Sir, very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

265.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

July, 1827.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

The worst political news is, that Canning is not well, and that the Duke of Wellington has dined with the King. Canning dead, Peel is the only man remaining alive in the House of Commons; —I mean, the only man in his senses.

The article on the new Ministry is by ——; violent, but there is considerable power in it.

I hope to be able to make good my excursion in the autumn, but it is doubtful; we have some thoughts of going to Scarborough. It seems to me as if you wanted sea air and bathing. Persuade Mr Meynell of this. He is a very affectionate husband; and if you look ill and don't eat, he will immediately consent: so come to Scarborough, dear G.

Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

266.] TO MESSRS ——, BOOKSELLERS, ——.

Foston, July 30, 1827.

Gentlemen,

I have received from you within these few months some very polite and liberal presents of new publications; and, though I was sorry you put yourselves to any expense on my account, yet I was flattered by this mark of respect and goodwill from gentlemen to whom I am personally unknown.

I am quite sure however that you overlooked the purpose and tendency of a work called ——, or that you would not have sent it to a clergyman of the Established Church, or indeed to a clergyman of *any* church. I see also advertised at your house a translation of Voltaire's "Philosophical Dictionary." I hope you will have the goodness to excuse me, and not to attribute what I say to an impertinent, but a friendly, disposition. Let us pass over, for a moment, all those *much* higher considerations, and look at this point only in a worldly view, as connected with *your* interests. Is it wise to give to your house the character of publishers of infidel books? The English people are a very religious people, and those who are not hate the active dissemination of irreligion. The zealots of irreligion are few and insignificant, and confined principally to London. You have not a chance of eminence or success in that line; and I advise you prudently and quietly to back out of it.

I hate the insolence, persecution, and intolerance which so often pass under the name of religion, and (as you know) I have fought against them; but I have an unaffected horror of irreligion and impiety; and every principle of suspicion and fear would be excited in me by a man who professed himself an infidel.

I write this from respect to you. It is quite a private communication, and I am sure you are too wise and too enlightened to take it in evil part.

I was very much pleased with the "Two Months in Ireland," but did not read the poetical part; the prosaic division of the work is very good.

I remain, Gentlemen, yours faithfully,

SYDNEY SMITH.

267.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

November 6, 1827.

Dear Lady Holland,

I was very sorry to hear from Mrs Robert Smith that you were indisposed at Cheam. These three—November, December, and January—are the unhappy months. I do not expect a moment's

happiness before the 1st of February. Cheam was built (as it is now ascertained) by Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites. I think it is one of the worst and most incurable places I ever saw, but if it amuses poor Bobus it was not created in vain.

You know these matters better than I; but my conjecture is that Lord Grey will go into regular opposition, or at least very soon slide into it. Whatever his intentions may be at the beginning, nobody heats so soon upon the road.

Jeffrey has been here with his adjectives, who always travel with him. His throat is giving way; so much wine goes down it, so many million words leap over it, how can it rest? Pray make him a judge; he is a truly great man, and is very heedless of his own interests. I lectured him on his romantic folly of wishing his friends to be preferred before himself, and succeeded, I think, in making him a little more selfish.

I have never ceased talking of the beauty of Ampthill, and in those unmeasured terms of which Mary accuses me. I am afraid I *do* deal a little sometimes in superlatives, but it is only when I am provoked by the coldness of my fellow-creatures. You see my younger brother, Courtenay, is turned out of office in India, for refusing the surety of the East India Company! Truly the Smiths are a stiff-necked generation, and yet they have all got rich but I. Courtenay, they say, has £150,000, and he keeps only a cat! In the last letter I had from him, which was in 1802, he confessed that his money was gathering very fast.

S. S.

[268.]

[This diverting letter requires some explanations, which Mr Howard, of Corby, has been kind enough to furnish. I give it in his own words.—ED.]

"The following letter is not dated, but the frank of Lord Morpeth, 'Malton, November 22, 1827,' supplies the omission; it was addressed to me shortly after we had met Mr Sydney Smith and Sir James Mackintosh at Brougham Hall. The disquisition which gave rise to it was a sequel of some conversation on the subject. It was entitled:—

"'*Account of some of the Roman Legions and Cohorts stationed on and near the Roman Wall, with a Geographical Reference to the places from whence they came.*

"'PREFATORY REMARKS.

"'The policy of the Romans, who governed one conquered nation by the powers of another, and made use of the turbulent and refrac-

tory subjects of one part of their empire to keep the others in subjection, was very fully evinced by the garrisons on the Roman Wall (which was the northern extremity of their possessions) being composed of troops from all nations, even the most southern extremity of their dominions.

"'Thus we see Numidian Moors, and troops from the most distant southern regions, brought to shiver in the bleakest parts of Cumberland and Northumberland.'

"*N.B*—An enumeration of the different Numidian, Hungarian, Thracian, and other legions, found by records to have been stationed at the forts along the Roman Wall, was given in proof of the foregoing remarks: to which Mr Sydney Smith sent the subjoined reply."

To Philip Howard, Esq., Corby Castle.

Foston, Saturday.

My dear Sir,

My opposition to the Numidian Colony is, I assure you, not lurking, but salient and luminous, and founded upon a research, I must say, rather wider than your own. In the first place, I object to your geographical description of Mauritania, and rather suspect you have followed the geographers of the school of Ptolemy,—at least, so I should suspect, from your erroneous notions of the confines of Mauritania. Upon this subject let me beg you to consult the learned Barkius "De Rebus Mauritaniensibus," fol. Bat. 1672; Pluker's "Africa," cap. 2, sec. 3; the "Mauritania" of Viger, Paris, 1679, quarto; and the "Africa Vulgata" of Scoppius. Baden, the famous Dutch scholar, fell into the same error with yourself, but was properly chastised in the "Badius Flagellatus," now become a very scarce book, but which you may certainly borrow from Mr Archdeacon Wrangham.

Are you acquainted with the dissertation of Professor la Manche, than which, Gibbon says, "nothing more copious and satisfactory ever issued from the French press?" The perusal of these works will, I think, give you new ideas upon the eastern division of the Syrtis. Abalaba can have nothing possibly to do with the Africans. —— has shown this word to come from *Abal*, the lord of the British chiefs. Blakarus, or Barkarus, cannot be African words; for Tonnericus "De Rebus Africanis," and Crakius "De Linguis Occidentalibus," have shown, in all the languages of that coast, the total absence of the vowels *a* and *u*, and have even produced great and reasonable doubts of *e*, *i*, and *o*. The Emperor Gordian could not have been crowned at Tidrus. Nobody could imagine *that*, who for an instant had inspected and studied the late discoveries brought to light in the Phelian marbles. The province of Byzacum

proper does not lie to the south of Tunis; you are mistaking it for Fyzacum. The first signifies, in the ancient Coptic, *head of fire*, whereas Fyzacum signifies *red with wheat.*

I could go on for an hour, pointing out the mistakes into which a spirit of hypothesis has plunged your excellent understanding. I end with seriously advising you to read Galt and Porringer;* and, if you are not then cured of this kind of theory, I must pronounce you, my dear Mr Howard, to be incurable. Ever yours very truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

269.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Edinburgh, 1827.

My dear Lady Grey,

You are so kind, that I am sure you will be glad to hear that Mrs Sydney bore the rest of her journey well, though she is not yet off the sofa.

Dr Thomson advises as follows for you :—

Broiled meat at breakfast, an egg, and chocolate.
At twelve, a basin of rich soup.
At two, a meat luncheon and a tumbler of porter.
A jelly at four.
Dinner at six; four or five glasses of claret.
Tea and a whole muffin.
Hot supper and negus at ten.
Something nourishing at the side of your bed.

I have been to-day to an exhibition of Scotch portraits. High cheek-bones are not favourable to the fine arts.

I found it dreadfully cold from Alnwick to Edinburgh. My companions were a captain of a man-of-war and a sherry merchant from Cadiz. My vendor of sherry told me that all the accounts of Ferdinand's sending regiments were most absurd; that he could no more send men than send angels; that he was *not* devout; that, in fact, the Spanish nation did not exist; that the French and the monks in the south of Spain were most unpopular; that the people at large ardently desired a Constitution; and that he had sherry at all prices from £27 to £57 per butt.

And so, dear Lady Grey, God bless you! Read cheerful books, play at cards, look forward two hours, and believe me always most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

* "Galt. de Colon. Roman." Venet. 1672; and Porringer's celebrated treatise of "Mare nec liberum nec clausum;" the London, not the Scotch edition.

270.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Foston, Jan. 4, 1828.

We were married on New Year's Day,* and are *gone!* I feel as if I had lost a limb, and were walking about with one leg,—and nobody pities this description of invalids. How many amputations you have suffered! Ere long, I do not think you will have a leg to stand on.

Kind regards to my Lord and my friends your daughters; as many years to you all as you wish for yourselves. Your affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

271.] FROM LADY LYNDHURST.

George Street, Jan. 24, 1828.

My dear Mr Smith,

My husband has just informed me that he has nominated you to a vacant stall at Bristol; and he was willing that I should have the pleasure of first communicating to you this good news. I need not say how *much* it has delighted me. Pray have the goodness to write and inform me how you and Mrs Sydney are, and where your new-married daughter is. Best regards to all you love. Ever yours, S. G. LYNDHURST.

272.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Bristol, Feb. 17, 1828.

My dear Lady Holland,

An extremely comfortable prebendal house; seven-stall stables and room for four carriages, so that I can hold all your *cortège* when you come; looks to the south, and is perfectly snug and parsonic; masts of West-Indiamen seen from the windows. The colleagues I have found here are a Mr Ridley, cousin to Sir Matthew; a very good-natured, agreeable man,—deaf, tottering, worldly-minded, vain as a lawyer, noisy, and perfectly good-natured and obliging. The little Dean I have not seen; he is as small as the Bishop, they say. It is supposed that the one of these ecclesiastics elevated upon the shoulders of the other, would fall short of the Archbishop of Canterbury's wig. The Archbishop of York is forced to go down on his knees to converse with the Bishop of Bristol, just as an elephant kneels to receive its rider.

I have lived in perfect solitude ever since I have been here, but am perfectly happy. The novelty of this place amuses me.

* Marriage of his youngest daughter to N. Hibbert, Esq.

It seems to me that Lord Wellington has made a great mistake in not putting a perfectly independent man, or an apparently independent man, over the army. The cry against a military governor will now be very loud. Your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

273.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Foston, July, 1828.

My dear Lord Holland,

I hear with great concern of your protracted illness. I would bear the pain for a fortnight for you if I were allowed to roar, for I cannot bear pain in silence and dignity.

I have suffered no damage in corn nor hay. Several Dissenters have suffered in our neighbourhood. Pecchio's marriage goes on well. The lawyers are busy on the settlements. I cannot say how happy it makes me to see in port a man so clever, so honourable, and so unfortunate. I go to Bristol the middle of September, calling in my way on the two Lyttletons, Abercromby, Meynell, and (but do not tell Whishaw) Lord Bathurst.

I am reading Walter Scott's "Napoleon," which I do with the greatest pleasure. I am as much surprised at it, as at any of his works. So current, so sensible, animated, well-arranged: so agreeable to take up, so difficult to put down, and, for him, so candid! There are of course many mistakes, but that has nothing to do with the general complexion of the work.

I see the Duke of Bedford takes the chair for the Amelioration of the Jews. It would make me laugh to see that excellent Duke in the midst of the Ten Tribes, and I think he would laugh also. But what will become of our trade of contending against religious persecution? Everybody will be emancipated before we die! I say *our* trade, for I have learnt it from you, and been your humble imitator.

God bless you, dear Lord Holland! There is nobody in the world has a greater affection for you than I have, or who hears with greater pain of your illness and confinement. S. S.

274.] TO HENRY HOWARD, ESQ.

Bristol, Aug. 28, 1828.

My dear Sir,

You will be amused by hearing that I am to preach the 5th of November sermon at Bristol, and to dine at the 5th of November dinner with the Mayor and Corporation of Bristol. All sorts of bad theology are preached at the Cathedral on that day, and all sorts of

bad toasts drunk at the Mansion-House. I will do neither the one nor the other, nor bow the knee in the house of Rimmon.

It would, I am sure, give Mrs Sydney and myself great pleasure to pay you a visit in Cumberland, and one day or another it shall be done; but remember, the difference is, you pass near us in coming to London, and it must be by *malice prepense* if we come to you. I hope you have seen the Carlisles, because I wish you all sorts of happiness, and know none greater than the society of such enlightened, amiable, and dignified people. When does Philip come to see me? does he fear being converted to the Protestant faith? Brougham thinks the Catholic question as good as carried; but I never think myself as good as carried, till my horse brings me to my stable-door! Still Dawson's conversion is portentous. Lady —— in former times insisted upon Lady Bessborough having a tooth out before she herself would venture:—probably Peel has made Dawson become a proselyte before him, in the same spirit. What am I to do with my time, or you with yours, after the Catholic question is carried?

Fine weather,—or, to speak more truly, dreadful heat;—both hay and corn without a drop of rain; while many Dissenters in the neighbourhood have lost their crops. I have read Knight's pamphlet: pretty good, though I think, if I had seen as much, I could have told my story better;—but I am a conceited fellow. Still, whatever are my faults, I am, dear Mr Howard, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

275.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Bristol, Nov. 5, 1828.

My dear Lord Holland,

To-day I have preached an honest sermon (5th of November), before the Mayor and Corporation, in the Cathedral;—the most Protestant Corporation in England! They stared at me with all their eyes. Several of them could not keep the turtle on their stomachs. I know your taste for sermons is languid, but I must extract one passage for Lord Holland, to show that I am still as honest a man as when he first thought me a proper object for his patronage.

"I hope, in the condemnation of the Catholic religion, in which I sincerely join their worst enemies, I shall not be so far mistaken as to have it supposed that I would convey the slightest approbation of any laws which disqualify and incapacitate any class of men for civil offices, on account of religious opinions. I consider all such laws as fatal and lamentable mistakes in legislation; they are the mistakes of troubled times and half-barbarous ages. All

Europe is gradually emerging from their influence. This country has lately made a noble and successful effort for their abolition. In proportion as this example is followed, I firmly believe the enemies of the Church and State will be lessened, and the foundation of peace, order, and happiness will receive additional strength.

"I cannot discuss the uses and abuses of this day; but I should be beyond measure concerned if a condemnation of theological errors were construed into an approbation of laws so deeply marked by the spirit of intolerance."

I have been reading the "Duke of Rovigo." A fool, a villain, and as dull as it is possible for any book to be about Buonaparte. Lord Bathurst's place is ugly; his family and himself always agreeable. Believe me always very affectionately, SYDNEY SMITH.

276.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

November 28, 1828.

My dear Murray,

Noble weather! I received some grouse in the summer, and upon the direction was marked W. M. This I construed to be William Murray, and wrote to thank him. This he must have taken as a foolish quiz, or as a petition for game. Pray explain and put this right.

The Kent meeting has, I think, failed as an example. This, and the three foolish noblemen's letters, will do good. The failure of the Kent precedent I consider as of the utmost importance. The Duke keeps his secret. I certainly believe he meditates some improvement. I rather like his foreign politics, in opposition to the belligerent Quixotism of Canning. He has the strongest disposition to keep this country in profound peace, to let other nations scramble for freedom as they can, without making ourselves the liberty-mongers of all Europe; a very seductive trade, but too ruinous and expensive.

How is Jeffrey's throat?—

> That throat, so vex'd by cackle and by cup,
> Where wine descends, and endless words come up.
> Much injured organ! Constant is thy toil;
> Spits turn to do thee harm, and coppers boil:
> Passion and punch, and toasted cheese and paste,
> And all that 's said and swallow'd lay thee waste!

I have given notice to my tenant here, and mean to pass the winters at Bristol. I hope, as soon as you can afford it, you will give up the law. Why bore yourself with any profession, if you are rich enough to do without it? Ever yours, dear Murray,

SYDNEY SMITH.

277.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

December, 1828.

My dear Lady Holland,

Many thanks for your kind anxiety respecting my health. I not only was never better, but never half so well: indeed I find I have been very ill all my life, without knowing it. Let me state some of the goods arising from abstaining from all fermented liquors. First, sweet sleep; having never known what sweet sleep was, I slept like a baby or a ploughboy. If I wake, no needless terrors, no black visions of life, but pleasing hopes and pleasing recollections: Holland House, past and to come! If I dream, it is not of lions and tigers, but of Easter dues and tithes. Secondly, I can take longer walks, and make greater exertions without fatigue. My understanding is improved, and I comprehend Political Economy. I see better without wine and spectacles than when I used both. Only one evil ensues from it: I am in such extravagant spirits that I must lose blood, or look out for some one who will bore and depress me. Pray leave off wine:—the stomach quite at rest; no heartburn, no pain, no distension.

Bobus is more like a wrestler in the Olympic games than a victim of gout. I am glad —— is become so bold. How often have I conjured him to study indiscretion, and to do the rashest things that he could possibly imagine! With what sermons, and with what earnest regard, I have warned him against prudence and moderation! I begin to think I have not laboured in vain.

I disappear from the civilised world on Friday. S. S.

278.] TO FRANCIS JEFFREY, ESQ.

No date: about 1828 *or* 1829.

My dear Jeffrey,

I trust you and I hang together by other ties than those of Master Critic and Journeyman ditto. At the same time, since I left your employment, you have not written a syllable to me.* I hope you will do so, for among all your friends you have none who have a more sincere regard or a higher admiration for you; and it would be wicked not to show these epistolary remembrances of each other.

I should be glad to know your opinion of the Corn Bill. I am an advocate for the principle, but would restrict the protection price to nine shillings instead of ten. The latter price is a protection to rents—not to agriculture. I confess I have not nerve

* Mr Sydney Smith ceased to write in the Edinburgh Review when he became a dignitary of the Church, towards the end of the year 1827.

enough for the stupendous revolution that the plan of growing our bread in France would produce. I should think it rash; and it certainly is unjust; because we are compelled to grow our lace, silk-goods, scissors, and ten thousand other things in England, by prohibitory duties on the similar productions of other countries. These views are probably weak, and I hold them by a slender thread, only till taught better; but I hold them.*

There is a great peer in our neighbourhood, who gives me the run of his library while he is in town; and I am fetching up my arrears in books, which everybody (who reads at all) has read; among others, I stumbled upon the "Life of Kotzebue," or rather his year of exile, and read it with the greatest interest. It is a rapid succession of very striking events, told with great force and simplicity. His display of sentiment seems natural to the man, foolish as it sometimes is. With Madame de Staël's Memoirs, so strongly praised by the excellent Baron Grimm, I was a good deal disappointed: she has nothing to tell, and does not tell it very well. She is neither important, nor admirable for talents or virtues. I see your name mentioned among the writers in "Constable's Encyclopædia;" pray tell me what articles you have written: I shall always read anything which you write. Is the work carried on well? The travels of the Gallo-American gentleman alluded to by Constable, are, I suppose, those of M. Simond. He is a very sensible man, and I should be curious to see the light in which this country appeared to him. I should think he would be too severe.

We are all perfectly well. I am busy at my little farm and cottage, which you gave me reason to believe Mrs Jeffrey and yourself would visit. Pray remember me to Murray, and believe me ever, my dear Jeffrey, now, and years hence, when you are a judge, and the Review is gone to the dogs, your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

279.] TO —— BEDFORD, ESQ.—(Bristol.)

Foston, Jan. 13, 1829.

Dear Sir,

I always intended to explain to you why I declined to be Steward to the dinner given for the Charity of the Sons of the Clergy, but it went out of my head while I was at Bristol.

I object to the whole plan of the thing. It appears to me quite ridiculous to desire two men to pay for a charity dinner, where actually, in many instances, less is collected during the dinner than the dinner costs. Men who mean to patronise a charity should

* Mr Sydney Smith held them not long. He became an advocate, and a very earnest one, for Free Trade.—*Note by Mrs Sydney Smith.*

dine at their own costs; the use of Stewards would then be, to guarantee the innkeeper that he should not be a loser by providing dinner for a certain number of persons.

If two gentlemen were to give such a guarantee to the extent of £15 or £20 each, this would be a fair tax upon their time, trouble, and pocket; but to ask any man to give a dinner for charitable purposes, where the guests *coming* for charitable purposes do not give the value of what they eat and drink, is an abuse which I never will countenance. It is in vain to say money is sent *after* dinner; so it would be if all paid *for* their dinner. If ever this alteration be made, and I am wanted as Steward, I will serve, or be at the expense of serving; but not till I have seen the amended plan.

I write this to you, not as Secretary to the Society, but as a neighbour and an acquaintance; because, though I have a right to say to the Society, yes or no, I have no right to criticise their institutions, or to propose to them any change in their plans. My *motive* for taking the part I have done, is, not only that I have no money to fling away upon institutions so faulty in their construction (however excellent their principle), but because I believe I am expressing the opinion of many persons who are too timid to express it themselves, and who would feel the expense as a great and unprofitable burden. I remain, dear Sir, with sincere good wishes, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

280.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, July 13, 1829.

My dear Lady Grey,

I should be very glad to hear that Lord Howick is recovered, and that you passed through your London campaign, if not with glory, at least without defeat and doctor's bills. I am extremely pleased with Combe Florey, and pronounce it to be a very pretty place in a very beautiful country. The house I shall make decently convenient. I have sixty acres of good land round it. The habit of the country is to give dinners and not to sleep out, so this I shall avoid. I am reading Hall's book, but will read it through before I say a word about it, for I find my opinion changes so much between the first and third volume of a book.

I was glad to see my Lord presiding at the democratical College: he would do it in the very best manner the thing could be done.

My spirits are very much improved, but I have now and then sharp pangs of grief.* I did not know I had cared so much for anybody; but the habit of providing for human beings, and watch-

* Mr Sydney Smith's eldest son, Douglas, died in the previous April, at the age of twenty-four.

ing over them for so many years, generates a fund of affection, of the magnitude of which I was not aware.

Though living in a very improved climate, we have had fires in every room in the house. It is a bad and an unhappy year! It grieves me to think, when you go to the North, that I shall be five hundred miles from Howick. It is now near thirty years since I made acquaintance, and then friends, with its inhabitants. You must all come and see this Valley of Flowers when you visit Lady Elizabeth in the West. It is a most parsonic parsonage, like those described in novels.

I cannot congratulate you, dear Lady Grey, upon the marriage of your daughter. Happen it must; but it is a dreadful calamity when it does happen.

You must read Basil Hall's Travels, at all events; that is inevitable. It is not a book which will (to use Lord Dudley's phrase) blow over.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Write me a line when you have any time to spare, to tell me of the welfare of all your family.

SYDNEY SMITH.

281.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Combe Florey, August, 1829.

Health and respect, dear Lady Morley!
I am quite delighted with the West of England.

. . . . . .

God send peace to the Empire, and particularly to the Church; and may mankind continue quietly to set forth a tenth of the earth's produce for the support of the clergy; inasmuch as it is known to draw a blessing on the other nine parts, and is wonderfully comfortable to all ranks and descriptions of persons.

SYDNEY SMITH.

282.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Combe Florey, 1829.

Dear Lady Morley,

I am sincerely sorry to hear of the protracted sufferings of Lord Morley; at the same time, my opinion always was, that the gout, entering upon a peer of the realm, had too good a thing of it to be easily dispossessed.

I am going on fighting with bricklayers and carpenters, and shall ultimately make a very pretty place, and a very good house. Nothing so vile as the artificers of this country! A straight line in Somersetshire is that which includes the greatest possible dis-

tappe between the extreme points. I should have had great pleasure in paying you a visit, but the Fates will have things their own way. I remain yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

283.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 6, 1829.

My dear Lady Grey,

The harvest here is got in without any rain. I mean, the wheat harvest. The cider is such an enormous crop, that it is sold at ten shillings per hogshead; so that a human creature may lose his reason for a penny.

I continue to be delighted with the country. My parsonage will be perfection. The only visitor I have had here is Mr Jeffrey, who, I believe (though he richly deserves that good fortune), is scarcely known to Lord Grey and yourself. A man of rare talent and unbending integrity, who has been honest even in Scotland; which is as if he were temperate and active at Capua.

Talking of honest men, I beg to be remembered to Lord Howick, on whom I lay great stress; from his understanding, rank, and courage, he will be an important personage in the days to come. Pat him on the back, and tell him that the safety and welfare of a country depend in a great measure on men like himself. Pray tell us of some good books to send for from the Subscription Library. I would tell *you*, if I had looked at any other book than the "Builders' Price Book." They are opposing poor Sir Thomas Lethbridge for the county of Somerset. I mean to vote and do everything I can for him: it is right to encourage converts.

Eternal rain here. Mr Jeffrey wanted to persuade me that myrtles grew out-of-doors in Scotland, as here. Upon cross-examination, it turned out they were prickly, and that many had been destroyed by the family donkey. SYDNEY SMITH.

284.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Sept. 29, 1829.

My dear Lady Holland,

After thirty years of kindness, it was not necessary to apologise for not replying to my light and nonsensical effusions, which really required no answer.

I am going to Lord Morley's, where I was first bound to meet the Chancellor and Lady Lyndhurst. Nothing can be more insane than to make such engagements in my present state. I consider that every day's absence from home costs me £10 in the villany of carpenters and bricklayers; for as I am my own architect and

clerk of the works, you may easily imagine what is done when I am absent. I continue to be delighted with my house and place.

The Duke of Wellington has given, I think, the first signs I ever remarked of weakness, in prosecuting for libels; not for libels which regard a particular fact, as that for which the Chancellor has prosecuted, but for general abuse. I am sorry for the King, and for all his subjects upon whom the evils of age are falling.

I told —— if he would have patience he would have a little girl at last. I might have said, he might have twenty little girls. What is there to prevent him from having a family sufficient to exasperate the placid Malthus? I met your neighbours, Mr and Mrs Calcott, at Bowood. Reasonable, enlightened people. I was also much pleased with Lady Louisa, Lord Lansdowne's daughter; very clever and very amiable. Luttrell came over for a day, from whence I know not, but I thought not from good pastures; at least, he had not his usual soup-and-pattie look. There was a forced smile upon his countenance, which seemed to indicate plain roast and boiled, and a sort of apple-pudding depression, as if he had been staying with a clergyman. God bless you, dear Lady Holland! Kindest regards to all. SYDNEY SMITH.

285.] TO JONATHAN GRAY, ESQ.—(York).

Combe Florey, Taunton, Oct. 10, 1829.

My dear Sir,

Nobody can more sincerely wish the prosperity of the road from York to Oswaldkirk than I do. I wish to you hard materials, diligent trustees, gentle convexity, fruitful tolls, cleanly gutters, obedient parishes, favouring justices, and every combination of fortunate circumstances which can fall to the lot of any human highway. These are my wishes, but I can only *wish*. I cannot, from the bottom of Somersetshire, attend in person, as a letter (2*s.* 6*d.* postage) yesterday invited me to do. Perhaps you will have the goodness to scratch my name out of the list of trustees.

You will be glad to hear that I am extremely pleased with this place. Friendships and acquaintances are not speedily replaced; but as far as outward circumstances, I am quite satisfied. If ever you come into this country I shall be very glad to see you; and I remain, dear sir, with sincere respect and goodwill, yours truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I shall think on the 15th of my friends at the White Bear, Stillington. How honourable to English gentlemen, that, once or twice every month, half the men of fortune in England are jammed

together at the White Bear, crushed into a mass at the Three Pigeons, or perspiring intensely at the Green Dragon!

286.] TO N. FAZAKERLY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, October, 1829.

Dear Fazakerly,

I don't know anybody who would be less affronted at being called hare-brained than our friend who has so tardily conveyed my message, and I am afraid now he has only given you a part of it. The omission appears to be, that I had set up an hotel on the Western road,* that it would be open next spring, and I hoped for the favour of yours and Mrs Fazakerly's patronage. "Well-aired beds, neat wines, careful drivers, &c., &c."

I shall have very great pleasure in coming to see you, and I quite agree in the wisdom of postponing that event till the rural Palladios and Vitruvii are chased away; I have fourteen of them here every day. The country is perfectly beautiful, and my parsonage the prettiest place in it.

I was at Bowood last week: the only persons there were sea-shore Calcott and his wife,—two very sensible, agreeable people. Luttrell came over for the day; he was very agreeable, but spoke too lightly, I thought, of veal soup. I took him aside, and reasoned the matter with him, but in vain; to speak the truth, Luttrell is not steady in his judgments on dishes. Individual failures with him soon degenerate into generic objections, till, by some fortunate accident, he eats himself into better opinions. A person of more calm reflection thinks not only of what he is consuming at that moment, but of the soups of the same kind he has met with in a long course of dining, and which have gradually and justly elevated the species. I am perhaps making too much of this; but the *failures of a man of sense are always* painful.

I quite agree about Napier's book. I did not think that any man would venture to write so true, bold, and honest a book; it gave me a high idea of his understanding, and makes me very anxious about his *caractère*. Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

287.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Dec. 14, 1829.

Dear John Murray,

My house is assuming the forms of maturity, and a very capital house it will be for a parsonage,—far better than that at Foston.

* Mr Smith had just settled at Combe Florey.

Your threats of coming to see us give us great pleasure. When will you come? Let it be for a good long stay. Pray remember me kindly to Mrs Murray, and tell her that the only fault I find in her is an excessive attachment to bishops and tithes; an amiable passion, but which may be pushed too far.

I cannot say the pleasure it gives me that my old and dear friend Jeffrey is in the road to preferment. I shall not be easy till he is fairly on the Bench. His robes, God knows, will cost him little; one buck rabbit will clothe him to the heels.

I have been paying some aristocratic visits to Lord Bath and Lord Bathurst. Lady Bath is a very agreeable, conversable woman. Lord and Lady Bathurst, and Lady Georgiana, are charming. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this country,—forty and fifty miles together of fertility and interesting scenery. I hardly think I have any news to tell you. The Duke of Bedford has given in his adhesion to the Duke of Wellington, as have all the Tories, except four. Read "Les Mémoires d'une Femme de Qualité sur Louis XVIII." It is by Madame du Cayla, and extremely interesting.

I was not at all pleased with the article in the Edinburgh Review on the Westminster Review, and thought the Scotchman had the worst of it. How foolish and profligate, to show that the principle of general utility has no foundation, that it is often opposed to the interests of the individual! If this be not true, there is an end of all reasoning and all morals: and if any man asks, why am I to do what is generally useful? he should not be reasoned with, but called rogue, rascal, &c., and the mob should be excited to break his windows.

God bless you, dear Murrray! SYDNEY SMITH.

288.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, 1829.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

I should be glad to hear from you, and the more so, as I have heard lately that your little boy was not stout. This place is very beautiful, and in a most beautiful country. I need not say how my climate is improved. The neighbourhood much the same as all other neighbourhoods: Red wine and white, soup and fish, bad wit and good nature. I am, after my manner, making my place perfect; and have twenty-eight people constantly at work.

I am often very unhappy at my loss. It is the first real misfortune which ever befell me.

Tell me some good books. Read Bourrienne's "Memoirs;" they are very curious and entertaining. I think I have made a very

wise move in coming here, and am perfectly satisfied with myself. I wish you were as much satisfied with me.

SYDNEY SMITH.

289.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

No date: about the end of 1829.

My dear Philips,

I shall follow Vance's plan, and am much obliged to you for reminding me of it. My attack was slight, but well for a begining; it was of the gout family, but hardly gout itself. I will come and see you, for old friendship's sake; but all countries will appear mean after this, and all houses comfortless after my parsonage, to which Foston House is as Sternhold and Hopkins to Lord Byron.

Read "Laurie Todd," by Galt. It is excellent; no surprising events, or very striking characters, but the humorous and entertaining parts of common life, brought forward in a tenour of probable circumstances. Read Raffles's Life. A virtuous, active, high-minded man; placed at last where he ought to be: a round man, in a round hole.

I am going on most prosperously with my buildings. I hope to be in town by the beginning of May. Your great Duke seems, like my ankle, to be getting stronger every day. He is an excellent Minister, and bids fair to be as useful in peace as in war, and to show the utility of beating swords into pruning-hooks.

And now, Sir George, let me caution you against indulgence in that enormous appetite of yours. You eat every day as much as four men in holy orders,—yourself a layman! Ever, my dear Philips, yours most sincerely, SYDNEY SMITH.

290.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, April 17, 1830.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

I have (as you say) had the gout, not severely, but it was a monition. How I came not to have had it years ago I cannot tell. My place is delightful; never was there a more delightful parsonage! Come and see it. Be ill, and require mild air and an affectionate friend, and set off for Combe Florey.

Have you read Moore? I come in, I see, for a little notice once or twice. I find the Peer and Poet (and I knew it only yesterday) has dedicated a stanza or two to me in "Don Juan."

God bless you, dear Gena! SYDNEY SMITH.

291.] TO H. HOWARD, ESQ.*

Combe Florey, Taunton, Aug. 2, 1830.

My dear Sir,

The intelligence we have received to-day, from the kind transmission of the Carlisle paper, gave us all here sincere pleasure. It is a pure pleasure to me to see honourable men of ancient family restored to their birthright. I rejoice in the temple which has been reared to Toleration; and I am proud that I worked as a bricklayer's labourer at it—without pay, and with the enmity and abuse of those who were unfavourable to its construction. We are finishing here, and are in a very beautiful parsonage; come and see me. You owe me some recompense for my zeal. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

292.] TO THE HONOURABLE MISS FOX.

August, 1830.

My dear Miss Fox,

Merely to say that these and twenty such handbills † were not, as you suppose, written by me, but by a neighbouring curate. They have had an excellent effect. There is one from Miss Swing, threatening to destroy crimping-irons for caps, and washing-machines, and patent tea-kettles; vowing vengeance also on the new bodkin which makes two holes instead of one.

Justices' wives are agitated, and female constables have been sworn in. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

293.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1830.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am not without apprehensions for the new French Revolution; but I admire and rejoice. However it may end, it was nobly begun. I do not know what to do with the captive Ministers, but I am afraid I must hang them.

I knew Huskisson very well, and sincerely lament his loss. He was to me a very agreeable man; for he was always ready to talk on his own subjects, and was always clear, instructive, and good-natured. The Duke has got rid of his only formidable antagonist in the House of Commons, and it seems to me clear that the remnant of that party will now enlist under his standard; and I dare say they have by this time taken the marching shilling.

I was not disappointed by Plymouth. The papers were delighted with my urbanity and good-humour, and by the appearance of ex-

* On the election of his son as M.P. for Carlisle.

† Letters to Swing.

cellent health which I exhibited. They described my visit to the dockyard and the Caledonia, and the deep knowledge of my profession which I displayed. If the real Sir Sydney goes there, he will infallibly be taken for an impostor.

I have great pleasure in hearing from you. We are now old friends, and have run the better half of the race of life: you, on high ground; I, on low ground. Of the little that remains, I endeavour to make the best. I am a little surprised that I have scrambled through it so well as I have. That I have lived on good terms with so many good people, gives me more pleasure than any other reflection. I must beg of the noble Earl and you to continue to me as long as you can that source of pleasure. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

294.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Weston House, Oct. 15, 1830.

My dear Lady Holland,

We are here on a visit to Sir George Philips, who has built a very magnificent house in the Holland House style, but of stone: a pretty place in a very ugly country.

I am very glad to see Charles in the Guards. He will now remain at home; for I trust that there will be no more embarkation of the Guards while I live, and that a captain of the Guards will be as ignorant of the colour of blood as the rector of a parish. We have had important events enough within the last twenty years. May all remaining events be culinary, amorous, literary, or anything but political!

Lord John Russell comes here to-day. His corporeal antipart, Lord N——, is here. Heaven send he may not swallow John! There are, however, stomach-pumps, in case of accident. Bobus talks of coming to us in November. When I see him I will believe in him. We shall return home the beginning of November, stay till the end of the year, and then go to Bristol; that is, if the Church of England lasts so long; but there is a strong impression that there will be a rising of curates. Should anything of this kind occur, they will be committed to hard preaching on the tread-pulpit (a new machine); and rendered incapable of ever hereafter collecting great or small tithes. I remain always your affectionate and obliged friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

295.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Weston House, Oct. 24, 1830.

My dear Murray,

There will be no changes in the Government before Christmas;

and by that time the Duke will probably have gained some recruits. He does not want numbers, but defenders. Whoever goes into his cabinet, goes there as an inferior, to register the Duke's resolutions,—not as an equal, to assist in their formation; and this is a situation into which men of spirit and character do not choose to descend. The death of Huskisson has strengthened him very materially; his firmness, powers of labour, sagacity, and good-nature, and his vast military reputation, will secure his power. Averse from liberal measures, he will be as liberal as the times require; and will listen to instructed men on subjects where he has no opinions, or wrong ones.

During the first moments of the French Revolution, La Fayette had almost resolved upon a republic, but was turned the other way by the remonstrances and representations of the American Minister.

The new Beer Bill has begun its operations. Everybody is drunk. Those who are not singing are sprawling. The sovereign people are in a beastly state.

You are rich and rambling; pray come and see us next year. Your very sincere and affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

296.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

November, 1830.

Dear Allen,

Pray tell me how Lord Holland is, as I do not at all like the accounts I have received from Lord John.

I am frightened at the state of the world; I shall either be burnt, or lose my tithes, or be forced to fight, or some harm will happen to disturb the drowsy slumbers of my useless old age.

—— talks of coming to see me; but I have not the slightest belief. He will break down on the road, and return, or be lost in the Capua of Bowood, or be alarmed by Surrey incendiaries, and sit up all night surrounded by pails of water, squirts, and syringes. I have been visited by an old enemy, the lumbago; equally severe, as it seems, upon priests and anti-priests. I believe it comes from the stomach; at least it is to that organ that all medical men direct their curative intentions.

Tell me what is going to happen. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

297.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Nov. 21, 1830.

My dear Lady Grey,

I never felt a more sincere pleasure than from Lord Grey's

appointment. After such long toil, such labour, privation, and misrepresentation, that a man should be placed where Providence intended he should be,—that honesty and virtue should, at last, meet with their reward,—is a pleasure which rarely occurs in human life; and one which, I confess, I had not promised myself.

I am particularly glad that Brougham (if my friend Lord Lyndhurst must go out) is Chancellor,—for many reasons. I should have preferred Goderich for Home, Melbourne for Colonial Secretary. The Duke of Richmond is well imagined. I am very glad Lord Durham is in the Cabinet, because I like him, and for better reasons. Sir James Graham surprises me. The appointment is excellent; but I should have thought there must have been so many great people who would have been clamorous. Pray give John Russel an office, and Macaulay is well worth your atttention; make him Solicitor-General.

Adieu, my dear Lady Grey! Give my sincere and affectionate regards to Lord Grey. Thank God he has at last disappeared from that North Wall, against which so many sunless years of his life have been passed! Your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

298.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, November, 1830.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

What do you think of all these burnings? and have you heard of the new sort of burnings? Ladies' maids have taken to set their mistresses on fire. Two dowagers were burnt last week, and large rewards are offered! They are inventing little fire-engines for the toilet-table, worked with lavender water!

This place is perfection; I never saw a more charming parsonage or a more beautiful country. I go to Bristol for a residence of six weeks at the end of the year, or sooner, if my house is set on fire.

Never was any administration so completely and so suddenly destroyed; and, I believe, entirely by the Duke's declaration; made, I suspect, in perfect ignorance of the state of public feeling and opinion. Adieu! Ever yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

299.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Dec. 20, 1830.

My dear Philips,

I was in hopes to have spent a quiet old age; but all Europe is getting into a blaze, and that light-headed old fool, La Fayette,

wants, I see, to crusade it for Poland. Swing is retiring. He is only formidable when he takes you unawares. He was stopped in his way from Kent before he reached us. I can give you no plan for employing the poor. I took great pains about these matters when I was a magistrate, but have forgotten all my plans. There are too many human beings on the earth; every two men ought to kill a third.

I should not be suprised if there were a dissolution of Parliament. I think the Tories will try to make a last rally with this Parliament, yet the fools ought to see that there is nothing between Lord Grey and Cobbett.

—— spent a fortnight with us; he was remarkably well and contradictory—clear of gout and of assent.

Read the "Collegians," an admirable novel, but an old one, of two or three years' standing. SYDNEY SMITH.

300.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Clifton, January 3, 1831.

My dear Murray,

I have not heard the particulars of Jeffrey becoming Lord Advocate, but I know enough to know they redound to your honour. Your conspiracy at Brougham Hall must have been very interesting. Principally Edinburgh Reviewers! How very singular! The Review began in high places (garrets), and ends in them.

There is an end of insurrection; I had made up my mind to make an heroic stand, till the danger became real and proximate, and then I should have been discreet and capitulating.

I can hardly picture to myself the rage and consternation of the Scotch Tories at this change, and at the liberality which is bursting out in every part of Scotland, where no lava and volcanic matter were suspected. I love liberty, but hope it can be so managed that I shall have soft beds, good dinners, fine linen, &c., for the rest of my life. I am too old to fight or to suffer. God bless you! Love to Mrs Murray. Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

301.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Bristol, Jan. 3, 1831.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

Brougham has kindly offered me an exchange of livings, which I declined with many thanks. I think the Administration will last some time, because I think the country decided upon Reform; and

if the Tories will not permit Lord Grey to carry it into effect, they must turn it over to Hunt and Cobbett.

I think the French Government far from stable,—like Meynell's horses at the end of a long day's chase. The government of the country is in the hands of armed shopkeepers; and when the man with the bayonet deliberates, his reasons are more powerful than civilians can cope with. I am tired of liberty and revolution! Where is it to end? Are all political agglutinations to be unglued? Are we prepared for a second Heptarchy, and to see the King of Sussex fighting with the Emperor of Essex, or marrying the Dowager Queen of Hampshire?

It would be amusing enough if the chances of preferment were, after all, to make me your neighbour. Many is the quarrel and making up we should have together. Thank you, my dear friend, for saying that proximity to me would make your life happier! The rose that spreads its fragrance over the garden might as well thank the earth beneath for bearing it.

You see Jeffrey has been nearly killed at his election. How funny to see all the Edinburgh Reviewers in office! God bless you, my dear friend! SYDNEY SMITH.

302.] TO COLONEL FOX.

Combe Florey, Feb. 19, 1831.

My dear Charles,

There is an excellent man here, Major C——, late of the 32d, who instructed you, I believe, in the rudiments of your homicide profession. He is now on half-pay, has been in the service thirty years, and was in all the innumerable battles of the Duke of Wellington, ending in Waterloo, where he was wounded. Every man wishes to be something which he is not; and upon this general plan of human nature, poor Major C—— is expiring to be a colonel by brevet, I believe it is called; it carries with it no increase of pay, and is a mere appellation. Is this easy to be effected. If not over-difficult, lend the Major a helping hand; he is really a man of great merit, but has no friends to help him. He has many minds to write to you, but is modest, and will never do it; moreover, Irish Majors are not clever at inditing letters. I write wholly without his knowledge. He and Mrs —— have been remarkably civil to us, and I have taken a liking to him.

We are settled, as you may possibly have heard, in a most beautiful part of Somersetshire, where we expect Mrs Fox and you the first time you are within ten miles of us; for I have not the vanity to suppose that we could act upon you at a greater distance. I am truly sorry to hear that the most amiable and most able of all

Dukes of Lancaster is so ill with the gout: I thank God I have hitherto kept off that toe-consuming tyrant. I think Lord Grey seems to be emerging from the dark fog in which he began his career. If your father turns him off, he must give Cobbett the Garter instead of the cord. I see nobody between Lord Grey and revolution.

Pray remember me most kindly to dear Mrs Fox, and if she has forgotten me, help her to some primary tokens;—grace and slenderness, gravity and taciturnity, and other remarks which you can hit off with a bold pencil. I am panting to know a little what passes in the world. I meant to have been in London ere now, but have been prevented; above all I want to see Brougham on his sack of wool. I see (meaning to say only a few words about poor Major ——) I have written a long letter; but if you have not time to read it, make Mrs Fox read it, and tell you the contents.

SYDNEY SMITH.

303.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Feb. 25, 1831.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

Our friends, I am afraid, have lost ground by their Budget, and there is no dissembling that they are weak; however, I hardly think the Tories would be bold enough to *wish* to succeed them just now. Another week will decide the fate of parties, perhaps of the kingdom. I have a very bad opinion of public affairs; I never thought so ill of the world. Arbitrary governments are giving way everywhere, and will doom us to half a century of revolutions and expensive wars. It must be waded through, but I wish it had all been done before I was born. Wild beasts must be killed in the progress of civilisation, but thank God that my ancestors,—that is, not mine, for I have none, but Mr Meynell's ancestors,—did this some centuries ago. Write to me, and God bless you! SYDNEY SMITH.

304.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Feb. 27, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I cannot help thinking of your new state. When I am very nervous I always do sums in arithmetic, and take camphor-julep Don't be afraid,—I am sure, from several signs, it will do; and don't pretend to say you don't care, the truth being that you *do* care, from the very bottom of your heart. I meant to come to town, to afford you my spiritual consolation during the crisis, but I had an alarum about my daughter; she had a very severe attack,

and her recovery for some time was so slow, that I was frightened; she is now recovered. I hope to see you in the spring, where you are. If Lord Bathurst is there, I shall break the windows.

Brougham's speech will make a great impression, and be very useful to the Administration. The world seems to be improving decidedly; I thought it would have come to an end before now. I have been exhorting my little friend Jeffrey to make a great speech on Reform. Pray perceive his worth and great talents.

Give my kind regards to my Lord. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

305.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

The person in question,—or rather, the parson in question,—Mr ——, is respectable, of small preferment, large family, good private fortune, moderate understanding, great expectations from relations; a sincere friend to the emancipation of the Catholics, when there was danger and merit in publishing such opinions.

Once for all, I take it for granted that neither Lord Grey nor you think me such an absurd coxcomb as to imagine that, with inferior information, experience, and talents, I can offer any advice to Lord Grey; the truth is, that I attach such very little importance to my own opinions, that I have never the slightest objection to give them. And so, without any more preamble, or any repetition of preamble, I will tell you from time to time what occurs to me. I take it for granted you are prepared to make peers, to force the measure if it fail again, and I would have this intention half-officially communicated in all the great towns before the Bill was brought in. If this is not done—I mean, if peers are not made—there will be a general convulsion, ending in a complete revolution. Do not be too dignified, but yield to the necessity of demi-official communications. If the Huskisson party in the Cabinet are refractory about making peers (should such a creation be necessary) turn out the Huskisson party. Their power is gone; they are entirely at your mercy. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

306.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

March 5, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am just returned from my living in Devonshire, where I was called by a sort of rebellion of my curate. I find here your letter, for which many and best thanks.

I am now quite at my ease about Lord Grey and yourself.

Whether Lord Grey will go out or not, I cannot conjecture, as I know so little of the way Parliament is leaning; but if he is driven out, it will be with an immense increase of reputation, with the gratitude and best wishes of the country, and with the sincere joy of his friends that he has ventured upon office, because they must know that he will be a happier man for all that has taken place. The plan is as wise as it is bold. I call it a magnificent measure, and am heartily glad it is understood to be his individually. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! S. S.

307.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, March 18, 1831.

My dear Lady Holland,

Of course it is impossible to reflect upon such extensive changes without being a little nervous; but, *taking the state of public opinion into the question*, I think it a wise and proper measure. Yesterday I delivered a glowing harangue at Taunton, in favour of it; justice compels me to say that there were only five coats in the room; the rest were jackets and smock-frocks. They were delighted with me, and said they should like to bring me in as a member.

Never write me any apologies, dear Lady Holland. You are always sure of me. Sometimes I hear and see less of yourself and Lord Holland, but I am irrevocably attached to you both. It would be odd, after thirty years of kindness and friendship from you and yours, if I were to alter for the little bit of life which remains to me. It will seem very odd to me to pass through Downing Street, and to see all my old friends turned into official dignitaries.

I think the Jews should be kept for the private tyranny and intolerance of the Bishops. Thirty thousand Jews!—it is but a small matter! Do not be too hard upon the Church!

SYDNEY SMITH.

308.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Sidmouth, April 25, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

Bold King! bold Ministers! The immediate effect of the measure is, that I had no sleep all last night. A meeting of freeholders at the inn at Sidmouth; much speaking, and frequent sound of Lord Grey's name through the wall. I had a great mind, being a Devonshire freeholder, to appear suddenly in night-cap and dressing-gown, and to make a speech.

I have left off writing myself, but I have persuaded a friend of mine, a Mr Dyson, to publish his speech to the freeholders, which I

believe will be in your hands by Wednesday or Thursday, from Ridgway. You may suppose it to be mine, but it is not; and I ask it as a particular favour from Lord Grey and you, that you will not mention you have received it from me, or that I had any influence in producing it. It is a mite added to the public stock of liberal principles, and not worth caution or trouble; but my plan has always been to contribute my mite, and in my own particular way. My sincere hope is, that all this political agitation may not worry you, nor injure the health of Lord Grey. SYDNEY SMITH.

309.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

8 *Gloucester Place, Clifton, May*, 1831.

My dear Murray,

Pray tell me how you are all going on in Scotland. Is Jeffrey much damaged? They say he fought like a lion, and would have been killed had he been more visible; but that several people struck at him who could see nothing, and so battered infinite space instead of the Advocate.

I think Lord Grey will give me some preferment if he stays in long enough; but the upper parsons live vindictively, and evince their aversion to a Whig Ministry by an improved health. The Bishop of —— has the rancour to recover after three paralytic strokes, and the Dean of —— to be vigorous at eighty-two. And yet these are men who are called Christians!

Do these political changes make any difference in your business? You are so rich that it is of no consequence; but still it is pleasant to progress. Give my kind regards to your excellent wife, and to Mrs Jeffrey, a great favourite of mine. SYDNEY SMITH.

310.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

May, 1831.

. . . . . .

I met John Russel at Exeter. The people along the road were very much disappointed by his smallness. I told them he was much larger before the Bill was thrown out, but was reduced by excessive anxiety about the people. This brought tears into their eyes! S. S.

311.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, July, 1831.

My dear Lady Holland,

The weather here appears to have resembled the weather of the metropolis. At present it is oppressively hot. All my family are

here; I feel patriarchal. Cholera has not yet come amongst us, but it is at either end of our line,—at Exeter and Plymouth, and at Bristol. Seeing but little company, and not hearing every day how Thompson, and Simpson, and Jackson were attacked, I think less about it.

Philosopher Malthus came here last week. I got an agreeable party for him of unmarried people. There was only one lady who had had a child; but he is a good-natured man, and, if there are no appearances of approaching fertility, is civil to every lady. Malthus is a real moral philosopher, and I would almost consent to speak as inarticulately, if I could think and act as wisely.

Read Cicero's "Letters to Atticus," translated by the Abbé Mongon, with excellent notes. I sit in my beautiful study, looking upon a thousand flowers, and read agreeable books, in order to keep up arguments with Lord Holland and Allen. I thank God heartily for my comfortable situation in my old age,—above my deserts, and beyond my former hopes. SYDNEY SMITH.

312.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

August 18, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am truly glad to hear such an account of Lord Grey. Pray keep us at peace if it be possible, and deal only in glowing expostulations, not in blows. There is no wish for war in the country, quite the contrary. It is a mere cry to defeat the Bill;—but I am sure nobody wishes for peace more than Lord Grey.

I am staying at Lord ——'s, where is that honest politician —— ——. I must confess that the rogue is a sensible, agreeable man, but it vexes me to see such base profligacy so rewarded.

SYDNEY SMITH.

313.] PROTEST.

Extract from the "Times."

The following Protest has been entered (*we hear*) upon the journals of the House of Lords by the new Bishop of Worcester.

Dissentient,—Because the Address says that we have been dragged into the war, whereas we are deliberately walking into it.

2d, Because scenes of horror, injustice, and oppression are never wanting upon the face of the earth; and war, arising from the generous spirit of repressing such evils, would be interminable.

3d, Because we are ruined.

4th, Because no evil to arise from the ascendancy of France over Spain would be equal to the evil of going to war to prevent it.

5th, Because it is very probable that the Bourbons may be destroyed in the contest they have brought on themselves, without the necessity of our going to war at all to effect so desirable an object.

6th, Because a system of absolute neutrality, so essential at this moment to the welfare of Great Britain, is, from our insular situation, at all times a much safer policy here than it would be for any continental nation.

7th, Because such is the wicked and profligate extravagance with which all British wars are conducted, and so ineffectual the control exercised by a corrupt House of Commons over our national expenses, that nothing but the dread of invasion or the preservation of faith should induce this country to give up the advantages of peace. SYDNEY VIGOUR.

315.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

Many thanks for keeping us at peace. Life would not be worth having if there was a war.

I hope you have all escaped from influenza better than we have, for Mrs Sydney has been seriously ill, and has escaped upon hard terms.

I am going a tour for a week to Dunster Castle—Lord Fortescue's—and to Clovelly, a beautiful tract of country; and then I am going to Sidmouth, where I have taken a large house as close to the sea as your ball-room is to your drawing-room. I invite you and Lord Grey to come and see me; and there is a large Russian Princess who would be glad to make your acquaintance.

The passing the Bill in such weather, and against such opposition, will be honourably remembered, and is all virtue and courage. Lord Grey's path of honourable distinction is straight and clear, and nothing can now prevent him from getting to the end of it. You may depend upon it, that any attempt of the Lords to throw it out will be the signal for the most energetic resistance from one end of the kingdom to the other.

The harvest here is enormous, such as was never known in the memory of man; the weather celestial, and the sickness universal. The stoutest labourers as soon incapable of the smallest exertion.

SYDNEY SMITH.

315.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Saville Row, September, 1831.

My dear G.,

I am just stepping into the carriage to be installed* by the Bishop, but I cannot lose a post in thanking you. It is, I believe, a very good thing, and puts me at my ease for life. I asked for nothing—never did anything shabby to procure preferment. These are pleasing recollections. My pleasure is greatly increased by the congratulations of good and excellent friends like yourself. God bless you! SYDNEY SMITH.

316.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 6, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am very anxious about Lord Grey, and it will be a favour—a real favour—if you will write me a line,—literally a line. I don't want to know whether he is in or out, but whether he is satisfied with himself, and well. His speech was admirable; and so, as I learn from my letters, it was considered on the spot.

I send my speech, which missed you the last time I sent it. It is of little value, but honest. I found public meetings everywhere, and the utmost alarm at the idea of the Bill being thrown out; coachmen, ostlers, inside and outside passengers, barmaids, and waiters, all eager for news. From your grateful and affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

317.] TO LADY ELIZABETH BULTEEL.

Combe Florey, 1831.

My dear Lady Elizabeth,

I cannot say how much obliged we are by your kindness in sending us what must have cost you so much labour to write, and has given us so much pleasure to read.†

I hope you have no mobs and no cholera; fire upon the first, and go into the warm bath for the other, but do not imagine you will have no cholera in your neighbourhood. I do not altogether see why your coming here should depend on your going to town. Nothing does husband and wife so much good as occasional absences from home, and you could go nowhere where you would be more heartily received.

I hear now and then from Lady Grey, and was delighted to learn

* In the Prebendal Stall at St Paul's, given to him by Lord Grey.—ED.

† A beautiful song which Mr Smith had much admired when hearing it sung at Saltram by Lady E. Bulteel.

from her last that my Lord was quite well again. I wish, for a thousand reasons, but for none more than the consideration of your father's health, that Reform was carried. There are persons who can govern kingdoms as gaily and with as much *sang-froid* as they would play at draughts: such is not the case with your excellent father; affairs get into his heart and circulate with his blood.

Pray remember me very kindly to Mr Bulteel, and believe me, dear Lady Elizabeth, ever sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

318.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

October, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

The only fault in your character is, that you never read my Taunton speeches; though this may, perhaps, be accounted for by your porter never bringing you the papers, which I always send to you, as I have done this week. It seems absurd to make speeches in a little market-town; but I have made a constant rule in party matters to contribute my quota, however insignificant, and to blow a trumpet, though it is but a penny trumpet.

We are famous here for cheeses, called Cheddar cheeses; and I have taken the liberty to send you one, made by a reforming farmer.

Pray do not be good-natured about Bristol. I must have ten people hanged, and twenty transported, and thirty imprisoned; it is absolutely necessary to give the multitude a severe blow, for their conduct at Bristol has been most atrocious. You will save lives by it in the end. There is no plea of want, as there was in the agricultural riots. SYDNEY SMITH.

319.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Castle Hill, October, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I have anxiously reflected whether you mean to prorogue till after Christmas or not, and which is the better plan of proceeding. Supposing there had been no riots at Bristol, I should say, postpone till after the Christmas holidays, and let some such letter as this find its way accidentally into the papers:—

"My dear Lord,—I am very much obliged to you for placing before me so clearly your views respecting the present state of the country, and the policy which His Majesty's Ministers ought to pursue. I am so far from being offended at the liberty you have taken, that I feel grateful for your candour and your sincerity. It must occur to you, however, that your information, and that of any other individual not in His Majesty's Government, must necessarily

be very imperfect; and that, if we differ on what is to be done, it is most probably because we reason upon very different premises. You know me well enough to be aware that the character of my Administration, my only hope of deserving well of my country, my happiness, and most probably my health for the few years remaining to me, all depend upon the passing of this Bill. I have the most acute interest to decide properly upon the period at which it may be re-introduced to Parliament; and I have information to guide me, which is, as it ought to be, accessible to very few persons besides myself.

"I am thoroughly convinced that the best chance of carrying the Bill quietly and effectually through both Houses of Parliament is, by postponing its introduction till after Christmas. I have the strongest expectations that it will be so carried; and you may be assured that my views and plans for that purpose would be materially impeded and endangered, if I were to yield to the well-meaning importunities of my friends, and agree to an earlier period. I have been forty years before my country, in which I have never sacrificed an English interest for the love of office. Give me a few weeks of confidence, and you will see that I have served you faithfully, honourably, and I firmly believe successfully, in this last struggle against corruption. GREY."

These sentiments, put into Lord Grey's elegant and correct language, and published *by mistake*, would have a great effect.

You must send down a special commission to Bristol, and hang ten people in the streets, and publish a proclamation. This done, I hardly think these riots need alter your plan of not meeting till after Christmas, if you have such a plan. I make no apology for writing my nonsense to you and Lord Grey. I prescribe for Lord Grey repeated doses of warm sal-volatile and water. Pray write me a line to say he is better, and give Macaulay a place. God bless you both! SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S—(*To Earl Grey.*)—I take it for granted you are quite resolved to make peers to an extent which may enable you to carry the measure. The measure is one of such indispensable necessity, that you will be completely justified by public opinion, and as completely overwhelmed by public opinion if you shrink from such a step; so I have done with this.

Cultivate Whishaw: he is one of the most sensible men in England, and his opinions valuable, if he will give them. It would give great satisfaction if a prebend were in course of time given to Malthus. Lord ——'s brother is a good scholar, a gentleman, with a mind not unecclesiastical, thoroughly honest, and to be depended

upon. Caldwell is fit for any ecclesiastical situation, for his prudence, sense, character, and honesty;—a great friend of Whishaw's. Wood will tell you about ——; you may trust him as long as you have anything to give him. Wait till after Christmas for the meeting of Parliament. I am sure this is right. I give you great credit for Lamb's Conduit Fields.

Pray keep well, and do your best, with a gay and careless heart. What is it all, but the scratching of pismires upon a heap of earth? Rogues are careless and gay, why not honest men? Think of the Bill in the morning, and take your claret in the evening, totally forgetting the Bill. You have done admirably up to this time.

320.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

20 *Saville Row, December*, 1831.

My dear Lady Grey,

I went to the debate. Lord —— and Lord —— were horrible. I wish apologies were abolished by Act of Parliament. They are all children to Lord Grey. He made an excellent speech, as prudent as it was spirited.

I submit the following little criticisms. Lord Grey should stand farther from the bench, and more in the body of the house; should stand more upright, and raise his arm (which no Englishman *does*, and all foreigners *do*) from the shoulder, and not from the elbow. But he speaks beautifully, and is a torch among tapers. Next to Lord Grey, I like Lord Harrowby; Lord —— speaks like a schoolboy. The whole debate was rather conciliatory. Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

321.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, December, 1831.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

I behave well, always well, but you have a little infirmity,—tactility, or touchiness. Pray guard against this; it grows upon you; and do not be angry with me for telling you this, for that would be an odd way of proving you were innocent of the charge.

Lord Grey is well; the King firm; the Bill will pass, partly by the defalcation of its opponents, partly by the creation of peers. Cholera will spread all over England. Read nothing about it, and say nothing about it; but when you are in the cold stage, send for one of my letters and place it near your heart, and your foolish doctor will ascribe your recovery to himself.

I had no idea Mrs Partington would make such a fortune; I sent

my speech to nobody, but it was copied into the "Times." I am told it is up at the caricature shops, but I did not see it. Your faithful and affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

322.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Bristol, 1831.

Dear Lady Morley,

I have taken possession of my preferment. The house is in Amen-corner,—an awkward name on a card, and an awkward annunciation to the coachman on leaving any fashionable mansion. I find too (sweet discovery!) that I give a dinner every Sunday, for three months in the year, to six clergymen and six singing-men, at one o'clock. Do me the favour to drop in as Mrs Morley. I did the duty at St Paul's; the organ and music were excellent.

Seeing several carpenters at work at Lord Dudley's, I called; and after he had expatiated at some length on the danger of the times, I learnt that he was boarding up his windows in imitation of the Duke of Wellington, who has been fortified in a similar manner ever since the Coronation. I am afraid the Lords will fling out the Bill, and that I shall pocket the sovereign of Mr Bulteel; in that case, I believe and trust Lord Grey will have recourse to peer-making.

I went to Court, and, horrible to relate! with strings to my shoes instead of buckles,—not from Jacobinism, but ignorance. I saw two or three Tory lords looking at me with dismay, was informed by the Clerk of the Closet of my sin, and gathering my sacerdotal petticoats about me (like a lady conscious of thick ankles) I escaped further observation. My residence is in February, March, and July.

Lady Holland is to have an express from the Lords every ten minutes, and is encamped for that purpose in Burlington Street. Adieu, dear Lady Morley! Excuse my nonsense. A thousand thanks for your hospitality and good-nature.

SYDNEY SMITH.

323.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Saville Row, 1831.

Dear Lady Morley,

No news. War against Holland, which may possibly swell into a general war.

—— has been to Cambridge to place his son; in other words, he has put him there to spend his money, to lose what good qualities he has, and to gain nothing useful in return. If men had made no more progress in the common arts of life than they have

in education, we should at this moment be dividing our food with our fingers, and drinking out of the palms of our hands.

I shall be at home to receive you in a few days. Why should you suppose, because you have more sense and wit than other people, that you should have less feeling and compassion for the real miseries of your fellow-creatures? In discussing this subject, I have always some individual widow in my mind; —— was the last; if I succeeded, to her be the glory. Be assured Lord Plunket is devoted to you; and next to him, your sincerely obliged clergyman,

SYDNEY SMITH.

324.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Jan. 7, 1832.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope to see you in the middle of this month; in the meantime a few words.

The delay has had this good, that it will make the creation of peers less surprising and alarming; everybody expects it, as a matter of course. I am for forty, to make things safe in committees. I liked Lord Grey's letter to Lord Ebrington. I am a great friend to these indirect communications in a free Government. Pray beg of Lord Grey to keep well. He has the thing on hand, and I have no doubt of a favourable issue. I see an open sea beyond the icebergs. I am afraid the Muscovite meditates war. Perhaps he is only saying to the French, "Don't go too far; for my eye is upon you, and my paw shall be so also, if you run riot." You may perhaps be forced to take O'Connell by the throat.

I cannot get the Bishop of —— to pay me my dilapidations. He keeps on saying he will pay, but the money does not appear; I shall seize his mitre, robes, sermons, and charges to his clergy, and put them up to auction.

We have had the mildest weather possible. A great part of the vegetable world is deceived, and beginning to blossom,—not merely foolish young plants without experience, but old plants that have been deceived before by premature springs; and for such one has no pity. It is as if Lady —— were to complain of being seduced and betrayed.

I cannot tell what has happened to our Church of St Paul. I have belonged to him for four months; he has cost me two or three hundred pounds, and I have not received a shilling from him. I hope to find him in a more munificent mood the ensuing quarter. Yours most respectfully and affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

325.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Supposed 1832.

My dear Lady Grey,

I did not like to say much to you about public affairs to-day, because I thought you were not well, but I *must* take the weight off my soul! I am alarmed for Lord Grey; so are many others.

Is there a strong probability, amounting almost to a certainty, that the Bill will be carried *without* a creation of peers? No.—Then make them. But the King will *not*.—Then resign. But if the King *will* create, we shall lose more than we gain.—I doubt it. Many threaten, who will not vote against the Bill.—At all events, you will have done all you can to carry it. If you *do* create, and it fail, you are beaten with honour; and the country will distinguish between its enemies and its friends.

The same reason applies to dissensions in the Cabinet, of which (though perhaps unfounded) I have heard many rumours. Turn out the anti-Reformers; you will then be either victorious, or defeated with honour. You are just in that predicament in which the greatest boldness is the greatest prudence. You must either carry the Bill, or make it as clear as day that you have done all in your power to do so. There is not a moment to lose. The character of Lord Grey is a valuable public possession. It would be a very serious injury if it were destroyed, and there will be no public man in whom the people will place the smallest confidence. Lord Grey must say to his colleagues to-morrow: "Brothers, the time draws near; you must choose this day between good and evil; either you or I must perish this night, before the sun falls. I am sure the Bill will not pass without a creation; it *may* pass with one. It is the only expedient for doing what, from the bottom of my heart, I believe the country requires. I *will* create, and create immediately; or resign."

Mackintosh, Whishaw, Robert Smith, Rogers, Luttrell, Jeffrey, Sharpe, Ord, Macaulay, Fazakerly, Lord Ebrington—where will you find a better jury, one more able and more willing to consider every point connected with the honour, character, and fame of Lord Grey? There would not be among them a dissentient voice.

If you wish to be happy three months hence, create peers. If you wish to avoid an old age of sorrow and reproach, create peers. If you wish to retain my friendship, it is of no sort of consequence whether you create peers or not; I shall always retain for you the most sincere gratitude and affection, without the slightest reference to your political wisdom or your political errors; and may God

bless and support you and Lord Grey in one of the most difficult moments that ever occurred to any public man!

SYDNEY SMITH.

[Though the natural reluctance of Lord Grey to have recourse to this extreme measure was shared by every member of the Cabinet, with greater or less strength, they were fully agreed that, if the Reform Bill could be carried by no other means, *that* must be resorted to. Lord Grey accordingly took to the King their unanimous resolution, that they must have the power to create peers to any extent they might deem necessary. Fortunately, they were not compelled to exercise it.—ED.]

326.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

May 17, 1832.

I sent you yesterday, my dear Lady Grey, another penny trumpet, blown at your political funeral. I wish you joy most heartily of your resurrection. Accept for Lord Grey and yourself my most sincere congratulations. You are now beyond the reach of accidents, and I hope will enjoy two or three years of entertaining dominion; more I am sure you do not want, if so much.

SYDNEY SMITH.

327.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 27, 1832.

My dear Lady Grey,

Are you gone to Howick? You must have great pleasure, the greatest pleasure, in going there triumphant and all-powerful. It must be, I fear, a hasty pleasure, and that you cannot be long spared.

One of your greatest difficulties is the Church; you must positively, in the course of the first session, make a provision for the Catholic clergy of Ireland, and make it out of the revenues of the Irish Protestant Church. I have in vain raked my brains to think how this can be avoided, but it cannot. It will divide the Cabinet and agitate the country, but you must face the danger and conquer, or be conquered by it. It cannot be delayed. There is no alternative between this and a bloody war, and reconquest of Ireland. I hope you will, if possible, make the Bishops bring in their own Reform Bill. They will throw it on the Government if they can. I foresee the probability of a Protestant tempest; but you must keep the sea, and not run into harbour: such indeed is not your practice. The Tories are daunted and intimidated here, and I think the members returned will be Reformers. Pray put down the unions as soon as Parliament meets.

We are all well. Cholera has made one successful effort at Taunton, and not repeated it, though a month has elapsed. Lord

John Russell comes here on Saturday, and the Fazakerlys on Friday; so we shall be a strong Reform party for a few days. My butler said, in the kitchen, "he should let the country people peep through the shutters at Lord John for a penny apiece." A very reasonable price. I wonder what he would charge for Lord Grey if he should come here.

The cholera will have killed by the end of the year about one person in every thousand. Therefore it is a thousand to one (supposing the cholera to travel at the same rate) that any person does not die of the cholera in any one year. This calculation is for the mass; but if you are prudent, temperate, and rich, your chance is at least five times as good that you do not die of the cholera,—in other words, five thousand to one that you do not die of cholera in a year; it is not far from two millions to one that you do not die any one day from cholera. It is only seven hundred and thirty thousand to one that your house is not burnt down any one day. Therefore it is nearly three times as likely that your house should be burnt down any one day, as that you should die of cholera; or, it is as probable that your house should be burnt down three times in any one year, as that you should die of cholera.

An enormous harvest here, and every appearance of peace and plenty. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! My very kind regards to Lord Grey and Georgiana. SYDNEY SMITH.

328.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, 1832.

I am truly sorry, my dear Lady Holland, to hear such bad accounts of Holland House. I am always inquiring about you from all London people, and can hear nothing that pleases me. Try if you cannot send me some more agreeable intelligence.

We have had several people here; among the rest, poor dear Whishaw and John Romilly. I was quite alarmed to hear of his fall, but he was good enough to write us a line to-day. He should never lay aside a crutch-stick, after the manner of Lord Holland. Luttrell comes here next week, and —— has appeared by excuse, in his usual manner. We are just returned from Linton and Lymouth;—the finest thing in England, and pronounced by three Mediterranean gentlemen, who were present, to be equal to anything in that sea. The Fazakerlys came there by accident, and to the same house where we were staying. Nobody to me more agreeable than Fazakerly.

The accounts, I am sorry to say, are not very good of Lord John's success in Devonshire. The Whigs whom I saw at Linton looked very black about it. We have had a delightful summer, and every-

bodyl has been pleased with our place; nobody more so than Whishaw. By the by, let me say a word about John Romilly; a very agreeable and a very well-informed young man;—very candid, though a *doctrinaire*, with very good abilities, and legal abilities too, such as I am sure will ensure his success. The whole effect of him, to me, is very agreeable. I hear that the success of Jeffrey and Murray is certain; that of Abercromby doubtful. S. S.

329.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

Nov. 3, 1832.

My dear Allen,

I saw Mackintosh: he wishes that his father's work should be as he left it, without any addition; in other words, the statue, without a modern nose or arm. Upon reflection, I should feel as he does: pray talk to Lord Holland on the subject, and send me your united opinions. We are the natural guardians of Mackintosh's literary fame; will that not be in some degree tainted and exposed to ridicule, if his history is furnished by a regular Paternoster hack? My leaning is, that such would be the consequence; and I told Mackintosh I would consult Holland House and tell him the result, but that I leant to his opinions. Believe me, truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

330.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Nov. 21, 1832.

My dear Friend,

Do not imagine I have heard with indifference of your success, or that of Giant Jeffrey. It has given me the most sincere pleasure. The gods are said to rejoice at the sight of a wise man struggling with adversity. The gods will please themselves; but *I* like to see wise men better when the struggle is over, and when they are in the enjoyment of that power and distinction to which, by their long labour and their merits, they are so justly entitled.

I am afraid of the war. Whether our friends could have avoided it or not, I know not, but it will be dreadfully unpopular; I should not be surprised if it were fatal to them. Pray say if Abercromby is sure of his election. His ambition is to be Speaker, and I should not be surprised if he succeeded. He is the wisest-looking man I know. It is said he can see through millstones and granite.

What oceans of absurdity and nonsense will the new liberties of Scotland disclose! Yet this is better than the old infamous jobbing, and the foolocracy under which it has so long laboured. Don't be too ardent, Johnny, and restrain yourself; and don't get into scrapes by phrases, but get the character of a very prudent

practical man. I remain here in a state of very inert vegetation till the end of February, and then we meet in London. Pray take care that Jeffrey is the first Judge. I have that much at heart; and to thwart him in that nonsense about Cockburn. I have done all I can to effect the same object.

We are living here with windows all open, and eating our own ripe grapes grown in the open air; but, in revenge, there is no man within twenty miles who knows anything of history or angles, or of the mind. I send Mrs Murray my epigram on Professor Airey, of Cambridge, the great astronomer and mathematician, and his beautiful wife :—

> Airey alone has gain'd that double prize
> Which forced musicians to divide the crown:
> His works have raised a mortal to the skies,
> His marriage-vows have drawn an angel down.

S. S.

331.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Dec. 16, 1832.

Dear Mrs Meynell,

I often think of you, though I do not write to you. I am delighted to find the elections have gone so well. The blackguards and democrats have been defeated almost universally, and I hope Meynell is less alarmed, though I am afraid he never will forgive me Mrs Partington; in return I have taken no part in the county election, and am behaving quite like a dignitary of the Church; that is, I am confining myself to digestion.

Read Memoirs of Constant, Buonaparte's valet-de-chambre, and Mrs Trollope's "Refugees in America." The story is foolish, but the picture of American manners excellent; and why should not the Americans be ridiculed if they are ridiculous?

I see no prospect of a change of Ministry, but think the Whigs much stronger than they were when we were in town. I have come to the end of my career, and have nothing now to do but to grow old merrily and to die without pain. Yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

332.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Dec. 22, 1832.

My dear Philips,

You seem to have had a neck-and-neck race; however, if the breath is out of his body, that is all that was wanted. I congratulate you upon the event; and, considering what it may lead to in George's instance, it is an ample indemnification for the defeat of Kidderminster. You must keep away from the House, and then no

harm will follow; and now Birmingham has Members of its own, the county Members will be less wanted. I can only say, thank God I am not in the House of Commons. Our election here is contested by the obstinate perseverance of a Mr ——, who, without a shadow of chance, has put the other Members to the expense of a poll. Many decayed eggs have been cast upon him, which have much defiled his garments; and this is all, as far as I can see or smell, that he has acquired by his exertions. We have been a good deal amused by seeing Sir —— perform the part of patriot and Church reformer.

We have read "Zohrab the Hostage" with the greatest pleasure. If you have not read it, pray do; I was so pleased with it that I could not help writing a letter of congratulation and collaudation to Morier, the author, who, by the by, is an excellent man.

I see Lord Grey, the Chancellor, and the Archbishop of Canterbury have had a meeting, which I suppose has decided the fate of the Church. Ever yours, my dear Philips, SYDNEY SMITH.

333.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Jan. 22, 1833.

My dear Lord Holland,

Nothing can be of so little consequence as what I write, or do not write; but I wish to own only the trumpery good, or the trumpery evil, of which I am the author. A pamphlet, called the "Logan Stone" (which I conjecture to be one of conservation and alarm), has been attributed to me. I give you my honour I have neither written nor read a line of it. If by chance it is mentioned before you, pray say what I say. SYDNEY SMITH.

334.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Jan 25, 1833.

. . . . . .

I do not think my short and humble epistle deserves the merciless quizzing it has received to-night. No man likes to have writings imputed to him which he did not write; and, above all, when those works are an attack upon old friends to whom he is under the greatest obligations. . . . S.S.

335.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Combe Florey, January, 1833.

Dear Lady Morley,

As this is the season for charades and bad pleasantry, I shall say,

from a very common appellation for Palestine, remove the syllable of which egotists are so fond, and you will have the name of the other party which the report concerns; but I repeat again, we as yet know nothing about it. Stapleton's letter is decisive, and puts an end to the question. You have no idea how the sacred Valley of Flowers has improved ever since you were here; but I hope you will, before the year is over, come and see. Mrs Sydney allows me to accept the present you sent me; I stick it in my heart, as P. B. sticks a rose in his button-hole. . . . Do you want a butler or respectable-looking groom of the chambers? I will be happy to serve you in either capacity; it is time for the clergy to look out. I have also a cassock and stock of sermons to dispose of, dry and fit for use. SYDNEY SMITH.

336.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 22, 1833.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you are all well after the fatigues of London, and enjoying the North as much as I do the West. I can conceive no greater happiness than that of a Minister in such times escaping to his country-seat. The discharged debtor,—the bird escaped from the cage-door, have no feelings of liberty which equal it. Have you any company? For your own sakes, I wish not. You must be sick of the human countenance, and it must be a relief to you to see a cow instead of a Christian. We have had here the Morleys and Lady Davy, and many others unknown to you. Our evils have been, want of rain, and scarlet-fever in our village, where, in three-quarters of a year, we have buried fifteen, instead of one, per annum. You will naturally suppose I have killed all these people by doctoring them; but scarlet-fever awes me, and is above my aim. I leave it to the professional and graduated homicides.

The ——s are with us. Mrs —— confined to her sofa a close prisoner. I was forced to decline seeing Malthus, who came this way. I am convinced her last accident was entirely owing to his visit.

I am so engaged in the nonsensical details of a country life, that I have hardly looked at a book; the only one I have read with pleasure is Sturt's "Discoveries in New Holland." There must be a great degree of felony and larceny in my composition, for I have great curiosity about that country; and if Lord Grey's friendship and kindness had left me anything to desire, I should ask to be Governor of Botany Bay. SYDNEY SMITH.

337.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Woburn Abbey, Dec. 4, 1833.

An old and sincere friend feels deeply for your loss, recollecting the ancient kindness of Castle-Howard, and the many happy days he has spent there.

It is impossible not to meet with affliction, but it is some comfort to think that many others grieve with our grief, and are thinking of us with deep and honest concern. God bless you, dear Lady Carlisle! I exhort you to firmness and courage, for there are in your mind those foundations on which the best courage is built.

S. S.

338.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Taunton, Dec. 24, 1833.

My dear John,

Pray send me a word or two respecting Scotland and Scotch friends. Is it true that one of the Scotch Judges is about to resign either life or place? and will Jeffrey succeed him? This will be very agreeable news to me, for I wish to see him in port. We are becoming quiet and careless here. What is your state in Scotland? I begin to hope we shall not have a revolution, though perhaps I am too sanguine.

Read Hamilton's "America,"—excellent, and yet unjust. Suppose a well-bred man to travel in stage-coaches, and to live at ordinaries here; what would be his estimate of England and Englishmen?

We are living here with open windows, and complaining of the heat. Remember me kindly to Jus and Pus Thompson,* and to Mr Rutherford. I regret sincerely I am so far from Edinburgh. God bless you, dear John!

SYDNEY SMITH.

339.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

December, 1833.

My dear G.,

The Ministers, you will admit (all Tory as you are), have at least sent you a most respectable man and gentleman as Dean of Lichfield. His style is, that he is a scholar, with much good sense, and with the heart of a gentleman. He was my next-door neighbour in Yorkshire, and I know him well.

We shall be in town the 18th of February: but if there is any chance of seeing you in town at all, it will be in July, one of my

* The Edinburgh lawyer and physician of that name were so distinguished by Mr Sydney Smith.—ED.

months of residence. Pray give over hunting. Ask Meynell to leave off. He has been pursuing the fox for thirty years. Glory has its limits, like any other pursuit.

I passed an agreeable month in London, finding the town full of my acquaintances and friends. I went to Brighton, which pleased me much; and visited the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lansdowne, at their country places. I admire the Duchess of Bedford for her wit and beauty. How are all your children? How are you?

SYDNEY SMITH.

340.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, May 23, 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

Pray make Lord Grey read the enclosed copy of my letter to the Chancellor. There is nobody to take the part of the parish clergy; they are left to be tormented by laws and by bishops, as frogs and rabbits are given up to the experiments of natural philosophers. In a few years your clergy will become mean and fanatical. Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

341.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, July, 1834.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

The thought was sudden, so was the execution: I saw I was making no progress in London, and I resolved to run the risk of the journey. I performed it with pain, and found on my arrival at my own door my new carriage completely disabled. I called on no one, but went away without beat of drum. I know nothing of public affairs—I have no pleasure in thinking of them, and turn my face the other way, deeply regretting the abrupt and unpleasant termination of Lord Grey's political life.

I am making a slow recovery; hardly yet able to walk across the room, nor to put on a Christian shoe. On Monday I shall have been ill for a month. Perhaps it is a perquisite of my time of life, to have the gout or some formidable illness. We enter and quit the world in pain! but let us be just however; I find my eyesight much improved by gout, and I am not low-spirited.

Pray let me hear from you from time to time, as you shall from me. Remember me to the handsome widow with handsome daughters; and believe me, my dear G., yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

342.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 12, 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

I should be glad to hear a word about the dinner; you must have been in the seventh heaven. I am heartily rejoiced at the great honours Lord Grey has received, and which I am sure will give him great pleasure in retirement.

I have spent a summer of sickness, never having been ten days without some return of gout or ophthalmia; at present I am very well, and laying up the aliments and elements of future illnesses. I shall be in London the 1st of November with Mrs Sydney, in Weymouth Street, where you paid me those charitable visits; for which, God's blessing be upon you!

I think —— has damaged the Administration from ten to twenty per cent. I wish our friend —— would not speak so much. I really cannot agree with him about Reform. I am for no more movements: they are not relished by Canons of St Paul's. When I say, "no more movements," however, I except the case of the Universities; which, I think, ought to be immediately invaded with Inquirers and Commissioners. They are a crying evil.

I have had a great number of persons coming to Combe Florey. They all profess themselves converts to the beauty of the country.

Terrible work with the new Poor Law! Nobody knows what to do, or which way to go. How did Lord Grey stand all his fatigues? Has Rogers been with you? Who should pay me a visit but P—— B——! His very look turns country into Piccadilly.

SYDNEY SMITH.

343.] TO MRS BARING.

Weymouth Street, Portland Place, 1834.

Dear Mrs Baring,

I have a favour to ask: could you lend our side such a thing as a Chancellor of the Exchequer? Some of our people are too little, —some too much in love,—some too ill. We will take great care of him, and return him so improved you will hardly know him.

You will be glad to hear my eyes are better—nearly well. Ever sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—What is real piety? What is true attachment to the Church? How are these fine feelings best evinced? The answer is plain: by sending strawberries to a clergyman. Many thanks.

S. S.

344.] TO MRS BARING.

Combe Florey, October, 1834.

Dear Mrs Baring,

L—— has just left us. We all think him a very excellent and agreeable man; but wholly ignorant, for the greatest part of the day, of our names and parish, and not very certain of his own.

See what you lose by being a Tory; your son might have been Bishop of Bristol; a very lean and ill-fed piece of preferment (it is true), but a passage to better things. Ever very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

345.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

November, 1834.

My dear Murray,

Many and sincere thanks for the grouse. I shall be heartily glad if you are returned. The fact is, the Whig Ministry were nearly dissolved before the King put them to death; they were weakened by continual sloughing. They could not have stood a month in the Commons. The King put them out of their misery; in which, I think, he did a very foolish thing.

The meetings in London are generally considered as failures. I was invited to dine with Lord ——. The party was curious: Lady ——, Mrs F—— L——, Barnes (the Editor of the "Times"), myself, and the Duke of Wellington. I was ill, and sent an excuse. Do not imagine I am going to rat. I am a thoroughly honest, and, I will say, liberal person, but have never given way to that Puritanical feeling of the Whigs against dining with Tories.

> Tory and Whig in turns shall be my host,
> I taste no politics in boil'd and roast.

S. S.

346.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

London, November 19, 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

Nothing can exceed the fury of the Whigs! They mean not only to change everything upon the earth, but to alter the tides, to suspend the principles of gravitation and vegetation, and to tear down the solar system. The Duke's success, as it appears to me, will entirely depend on his imitation of the Whig measures. I am heartily glad Lord Grey is in port. I am (thanks to him) in port too, and have no intentions of resigning St Paul's. *I* have not resigned. Still the King has used them ill. If he always intended to turn them out as soon as Lord Spencer died, he should have told Lord Melbourne so, and not have placed him in so awkward a

position; at least, as far as circumstances over which he has no control can place an able and high-minded man.

I am better in health, avoiding all fermented liquors, and drinking nothing but London water, with a million insects in every drop. He who drinks a tumbler of London water has literally in his stomach more animated beings than there are men, women, and children on the face of the globe. London is very empty, but by no means disagreeable: I find plenty of friends. Pray be in London early in January. I shall practise as I preach, and be there from January till Easter.

It is supposed that the messenger who is gone to fetch Sir Robert Peel, will not catch him before he is at Pæstum; in the meantime, the Duke of Wellington holds all offices, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, and is to be Bishop of Ely (if Ely dies), till Peel arrives.

SYDNEY SMITH.

347.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date: supposed 1834.

My dear Lady Grey,

There departs from Taunton this day my annual quit-rent cheese, and with it my hearty thanks and gratitude for the comfort and independence I have derived from the kindness of Lord Grey. We are all well, and mean to be in town by the 19th of next month. There is a report that we are going to be married, but I know nothing about it. If we are married, and the report proves to be true, I shall advertise for a daughter; I cannot possibly get on without a daughter; but I suppose it is only an idle rumour. Mild weather, the windows open, and thirty sorts of flowers blowing in the garden.

They seem to have given up the idea of your resigning. When I came down here, I found everybody sure you were upon the eve of abdication. I wish the Cabinet would do something about the rain,—it is eternal; and as the road to Taunton is sometimes covered with floods, we are cut off from butchers, doctors, tailors, and all who supply the wants of life.

As I know you are a good scholar, you may say to Lord Grey for me,—

> Precor ut hic annus tibi lætis auspiciis
> Ineat, lætioribus procedat, lætissimis exeat,
> Et sæpius recurrat semper felicior.

S. S.

348.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

(Soon after her marriage), 1834.

. . . . . .

The blessing of God be upon you both, dear children; and be

assured that it makes my old age much happier to have placed my amiable daughter in the hands of so honourable and so amiable a son. From your affectionate father, SYDNEY SMITH.

349.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

18 *Stratford Place, Jan.* 14, 1835.

My dear Lady Grey,

I believe the new Ministry are preparing some great *coup-de-théâtre*, and that when the curtain draws up there will be seen, ready prepared,—Abolition of Pluralities, Commutation of Tithes, Provision for the Catholic Clergy, &c. Somebody asked Peel the other day how the elections were going on. Peel said, "I know very little about them, and, in truth, I care little; we have such plans as I think will silence all opposition, or at least such as will conciliate all reasonable men." Do not doubt that he said this.

I was last week on crutches with the gout, and it came into my eye; but by means of colchicum I can now see and walk. Of course I had the best advice. I write to you, not to make you write to me,—for what can you tell me, where you are, but that C——, of C——, is well or ill?—but because I am in London, and you are not. You may say that you are happy out of office, but I have great disbelief on this subject. SYDNEY SMITH.

350.] TO SIR WILMOT HORTON, BART.

January 15, 1835.

Dear Horton,*

It is impossible to say what the result of all these changes may be. I do not think there is any chance of the Tories being suffocated at the first moment by a denial of confidence; if the more heated Whigs were to attempt it, the more moderate ones would resist it. If I were forced to give an opinion, I should say Peel's government would last through a session; and a session is, in the present state of politics, an eternity. But the remaining reforms, rule who may, must go on. The Trojans must put on the armour of the Greeks whom they have defeated.

Never was astonishment equal to that produced by the dismissal of the Whigs. I thought it better at first to ascertain whether the common laws of nature were suspended; and to put this to the test, I sowed a little mustard and cress seed, and waited in breathless anxiety the event. It came up. By little and little I perceived that, as far as the outward world was concerned, the dismissal of Lord Melbourne has not produced much effect.

I met T—— yesterday at Lady Williams's, a sensible and very

* Sir Wilmot Horton was at this time Governor of Ceylon.

good-natured man, and so stout that I think there are few wild elephants who would care to meet him in the wood. I am turned a gouty old gentleman, and am afraid I shall not pass a green old age, but, on the contrary, a blue one; or rather, that I shall be spared the trouble of passing any old age at all. Poor Malthus! —everybody regrets him;—in science and in conduct equally a philosopher, one of the most practically wise men I ever met, shamefully mistaken and unjustly calumniated, and receiving no mark of favour from a Liberal Government, who ought to have interested themselves in the fortunes of such a virtuous martyr to truth.

I hope you will disorient yourself soon. The departure of the wise men from the East seems to have been on a more extensive scale than is generally supposed, for no one of that description seems to have been left behind. Come back to Europe, where only life is worth having, where that excellent man and governor, Lord Clare, is returning, and where so many friends are waiting to receive you *à bras ouverts*,—among the rest the Berries, whom I may call fully ripe at present, and who may, if your stay is protracted, pass that point of vegetable perfection, and exhibit some faint tendency to decomposition.

The idea lately was, that Lord —— would go to India, but they are afraid his religious scruples would interfere with the prejudices of the Hindoos. This may be so; but surely the moral purity of his life must have excited their admiration. I beg my kind and (an old parson may say) my affectionate regards to Lady Horton. Yours, my dear Horton, very sincerely, SYDNEY SMITH.

351.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

February 4, 1835.

A few words to dear Lady Grey. Since —— has taken the field, both parties are become more bloody-minded, and a civil war is expected. The arch-Radicals allow a return of two hundred and sixty Tories, and count upon fifteen Stanleians. This was Warburton's statement to me the other day. Tories claim more; but, by the admission of their greatest enemies, they are, you see, the strongest of the four parties in the House of Commons. I missed Howick's speech. He is a very honest and clever man, and a valuable politician.

My daughter, Mrs Holland, was confined three or four days ago of a little girl, and is doing very well. I am glad it is a girl; all little boys ought to be put to death.

Thank you for the speech. Very good and very honest. I agree with you entirely as to the difficulty of finding anybody in the relics of the Whigs fit to govern the country. —— and ——, who have

every other qualification for governing, want that legion of devils in the interior, without whose aid mankind cannot be ruled.

I have no doubt whatever that Sir Robert Peel is sincere in his Church Reform. Bishops nearly equalised,—pluralities, canons, and prebendaries abolished,—tithes commuted,—and residence enforced. A much more severe bill than Whigs could have ventured upon.

Pray excuse my writing to you so often; but I am learning to write clear and straight, and it is necessary I should write a letter every day. I hear you are to be here by the end of the month. If you put it off for a week or two, you will perhaps not be here till the end of the Monarchy. Your affectionate chaplain,

SYDNEY SMITH.

352.] TO MRS ——.

18 *Stratford Place, Feb.* 22, 1835.

Dear Mrs ——,

Many thanks for your kind attention. I read half a volume last night;—but why dialogue? I thought that dialogue, allegory, and religious persecution were quite given up; and that mankind, in these points at least, had profited by experience.

I will tell you what I think of the authoress when I have read her, which I will do soon,—not from supposing that you will be impatient for my opinions, but for your books; and yet I should not say this of you, for God has written, in a large hand, benevolence and kindness on your countenance. Very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

353.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, May 14, 1835.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope office agrees with you, and that office is likely to continue. I congratulate you sincerely on recovering the Duchy of Lancaster. We are sad Protestants in the West of England, and can on no account put up with the Pope. Johnny is lucky to have got away alive; he was to have come here if he had triumphed. It seems rather a ridiculous position of affairs, when neither of the Secretaries has a seat in Parliament.

You always accuse me of grumbling against my party. As a refutation of that calumny, I send you my declaration of faith. I will take good care you shall never make *me* a bishop; but if all your future Whig bishops would speak out as plainly, little Johns would not be driven away from large counties. Lord Melbourne always thinks that man best qualified for any office, of whom he

has seen and known the least. Liberals of the eleventh hour abound! and there are some of the first hour, of whose works in the toil and heat of the day I have no recollection.

I cannot tell you the pleasure Morpeth's success has given to us here. The servants, who are all Yorkshire, and from the neighbourhood of Castle Howard, are in an ecstasy. It has saved dear Lady Carlisle from a great deal of nervousness and mortification.

Lord Alvanley is equal to Britomart or Amadis de Gaul. I thank him in the name of the fat men, for the noble stand he has made for circumference and diameter. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Extract from the "Taunton Courier," enclosed in the foregoing letter.

TO MR BUNTER.

Sir,

You have done me the honour, in your own name and in that of your brother requisitionists, to invite me to the meeting holden this day at Taunton. I am really so heartily tired of meetings and speeches that I must be excused; but I agree with you in your main objects.

It appears to me quite impossible that the Irish Church can remain in its present state. Vested interests strictly guarded, and the spiritual wants of the Protestants of the Establishment provided for, the remainder may wisely and justly be applied to the religious education of other sects. I go further; and think that the Catholic Clergy of Ireland should receive a provision from the State equal to that which they are at present compelled to extort from the peasantry of that country. All other measures without this I cannot but consider as insignificant; and it may be as well conceded now, as after years of bloodshed and contention. This, with time, and a long course of strict impartiality in the Government between Catholic and Protestant, may restore tranquillity to that light, irritable, and ill-used people.

For these reasons I cannot sympathise in the fears which are sincerely felt at this moment by many honest and excellent persons. I believe that Ministers have acted honestly and wisely with respect to the Irish Church; that their intentions to our own Church are friendly and favourable; and that, as far as they have gone, they deserve the support of the public. I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

SYDNEY SMITH.

354.] TO DR HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, June, 1835.

My dear Holland,

We shall have the greatest pleasure in receiving you and yours; and if you were twice as numerous, it would be so much the better.

What do you think of this last piece of legislation for boroughs? It was necessary to do a good deal: the question is one of degree. I shall be in town on Tuesday, the 23d, and, I hope, under better auspices than last year. I have followed your directions, and therefore deserve a better fortune than fell to my lot on that occasion. —— is the Mahomet of rhubarb and magnesia,—the greatest medical impostor I know.

I am suffering from my old complaint, the hay-fever (as it is called). My fear is, perishing by deliquescence; I melt away in nasal and lachrymal profluvia. My remedies are warm pediluvium cathartics, topical application of a watery solution of opium to eyes, ears, and the interior of the nostrils. The membrane is so irritable, that light, dust, contradiction, an absurd remark, the sight of a Dissenter,—anything, sets me sneezing; and if I begin sneezing at twelve, I don't leave off till two o'clock, and am heard distinctly in Taunton, when the wind sets that way,—a distance of six miles. Turn your mind to this little curse. If consumption is too powerful for physicians, at least they should not suffer themselves to be outwitted by such little upstart disorders as the hay-fever.

I am very glad you married my daughter, for I am sure you are both very happy; and I assure you I am proud of my son-in-law.

I did not think ——, with all his nonsense, could have got down to tar-water. I have as much belief in it as I have in holy water; it is the water has done the business, not the tar. They could not induce the sensual peer to drink water, but by mixing it with nonsense, and disguising the simplicity of the receipt. You must have a pitched battle with him about his tar-water, and teach him what he has never learnt,—the rudiments of common sense. Kindest love to dear Saba. Ever your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

355.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, June 3, 1835.

Dearest daughter,

Sixty-four years old to-day. If H—— and F——, in the estimation of the doctor, are better out of town, we shall be happy to receive them here before your rural holidays begin; your children are my children.

A fall of wood, greater than any of the other falls, has taken

place; the little walnut-tree and the thorn removed, and a complete view up the valley, both from the library and drawing-room windows. Great opposition—the place would be entirely spoiled; and twelve hours after, an admission of immense improvement. You have seen, my dear Saba, such things as these at Combe Florey. We are both well: no events.

I am afraid of war; I go at once into violent opposition to any Ministry who go to war. What a long line are the —— of needy and rapacious villains! I thought old ——'s letter good and affecting.

I have bought two more ponies, so we are strong in pigmy quadrupeds: my three saddle-horses together cost me £43, 10s., all perfect beauties, and warranted sound, wind and limb, and not a kick in them. Shall you ride when you come down? We are never without fires.

We are going through our usual course of jokes and dinners; one advantage of the country is, that a joke once established is good for ever; it is like the stuff which is denominated *everlasting*, and used as pantaloons by careful parents for their children. In London you expect a change of pleasantry; but M. and N. laugh more at my six-years-old jokes than they did when the jokes were in their infancy. Sir Thomas spoke at —— for two hours,—the Jew for one hour; the boys called out "Old clothes!" as he came into the town, and offered to sell him sealing-wax and slippers.

Give my kindest regards to your excellent husband, and believe me always, your affectionate father, SYDNEY SMITH.

356.] TO MISS ——.

London, July 22, 1835.

Lucy, Lucy, my dear child, don't tear your frock: tearing frocks is not of itself a proof of genius; but write as your mother writes, act as your mother acts; be frank, loyal, affectionate, simple, honest; and then integrity or laceration of frock is of little import.

And Lucy, dear child, mind your arithmetic. You know, in the first sum of yours I ever saw, there was a mistake. You had carried two (as a cab is licensed to do) and you ought, dear Lucy, to have carried but one. Is this a trifle? What would life be without arithmetic, but a scene of horrors?

You are going to Boulogne, the city of debts, peopled by men who never understood arithmetic; by the time you return, I shall probably have received my first paralytic stroke, and shall have lost all recollection of you; therefore I now give you my parting advice. Don't marry anybody who has not a tolerable understanding and a thousand a year; and God bless you, dear child!

SYDNEY SMITH.

357.] TO R. SHARPE, ESQ.

Stratford Place, 1835.

My dear Sharpe,

It is impossible to say whether Cæsar Sutton or Pompey Abercromby * will get the better; a civil war is expected: on looking into my own mind, I find an utter inability of fighting for either party.

—— is better, and having lost his disease, has also lost his topics of conversation; has no heart to talk about, and is silent from want of suffering.

I have seen the new House of Parliament: the House of Commons is very good, much better than the old one; the Lords' house is shabby. Government are going on vigorously with the Church Bill; it will be an infinitely more savage Bill than the Whigs would have ventured to introduce. The Whigs mean to start Abercromby against the Speaker. All the planets and comets mean to stop, and look on at the first meeting of Parliament. The Radicals allow 260 to the Tories, who claim 290: from 7 to 5 are given to the Stanley party. Read Inglis's Travels in Ireland. Bold, shrewd, and sensible, he is accused of judging more rapidly than any man in six weeks' time is entitled to do; but then he merely states what he saw. I met him; he seemed like his book. Young Mackintosh is going on with his father's Life. He sent me a tour on the Rhine, by his father; but I thought it differed very little from other tours on the Rhine, and so I think he will not publish it. You will be glad to hear that —— is doing very well: he is civil to the counsel, does not interrupt, and converses with the other judges as if they had the elements of law and sense. India was offered to Sir James Kemp before it was offered to Lord Heytesbury; Kemp refused it on account of a wound in his heel, a vulnerable point (as we know) in heroes. I hear a good account of your cough, and a bad one of your breathing; pray take care of yourself. Rogers might be mistaken for a wrestler at the Olympic games; Luttrell is confined by the leg; Whishaw is waiting to see which side he is to pooh-pooh! I heartily wish, my dear Sharpe, that physicians may do you as much good as they have done me. SYDNEY SMITH.

You have met, I hear, with an agreeable clergyman; the existence of such a being has been hitherto denied by the naturalists; measure him, and put down on paper what he eats.

* In allusion to the contest about the Speaker.

358.] TO SIR WILMOT HORTON, BART.

1835.

Dear Horton,

Why do you not come home, as was generally expected you would do? Come soon; life is short: Europe is better than Asia. The battle goes on between Democracy and Aristocracy; I think it will end in a compromise, and that there will be nothing of a revolutionary nature; our quarrels, though important, are not serious enough for that.

Read Mrs Butler's (Fanny Kemble's) Diary; it is much better than the reviews and papers will allow it to be: what is called vulgarity, is useful and natural contempt for the exclusive and the superfine. Lord Grey has given up public life altogether, and is retired into the country. No book has appeared for a long time more agreeable than the Life of Mackintosh; it is full of important judgments on important men, books, and things.

I have seen Lord Clare: he hardly looks a shade more yellow. The men who have risen lately into more notice are Sir George Grey, Lord Grey's nephew, and Lord Howick; Lord John and Morpeth have done very well; Peel admirably.

The complete —— has returned from Italy a greater bore than ever; he bores on architecture, painting, statuary, and music. Frankland Lewis is filling his station of King of the Paupers extremely well: they have already worked wonders; but of all occupations it must be the most disagreeable. I don't blame the object, but dislike the occupation; the object is justified, because it prevents a much greater destruction of human beings hereafter.

—— will get no credit for his book; it is impossible now to be universal: men of the greatest information and accuracy swarm in the streets,—mineralogists, astronomers, ornithologists, and lousologists; the most minute blunder is immediately detected. Believe me, my dear Horton, yours sincerely, SYDNEY SMITH.

359.] TO MRS ——.

Combe Florey, July, 1835.

Many thanks, dear Mrs ——, for your kindness in thinking of me and my journey after the door was shut: but you have a good heart, and I hope it will be rewarded with that aliment in which the heart delights,—the respectful affection of the wise and just.

I will write to you before I come to Boulogne, and am obliged to you for the commission. I have been travelling one hundred and fifty miles in my carriage, with a green parrot and the "Life of Mackintosh." I shall be much surprised if this book does not become extremely popular. It is full of profound and eloquent

remarks on men, books, and events. What more, dear lady, can you wish for in a book?

I found here seven grandchildren, all in a dreadful state of perspiration and screaming. You are in the agonies of change; always *some* pain in leaving! I could say a great deal on that subject, only I am afraid you would quiz me. And, pray, what am I to do for my evening-parties in November, if you are not in London? Surely you must have overlooked this when you resolved to stay at Boulogne.

Mr Whishaw is coming down here on the 8th of August, to stay some days. He is truly happy in the country. What a pleasure it would be if you were here to meet him! But to get human beings together who ought to be together, is a dream.

Keep a little corner in that fine heart of yours for me, however small it may be; a clergyman in your heart will keep all your other notions in good order. God bless you! SYDNEY SMITH.

360.] TO MRS ——.

August 28, 1835.

Dear Mrs ——,

Many thanks. The damsel will not take to the water, but we have found another in the house who has long been accustomed to the water, being no other than our laundry-maid. She had some little dread of a ship, but as I have assured her it is like a tub, she is comforted.*

I think you will like Sir James Mackintosh's Life: it is full of his own thoughts upon men, books, and events, and I derived from it the greatest pleasure. He makes most honourable mention of your mother, whom I only know by one of her productions,—enough to secure my admiration. It is impossible to read Mill's violent attack upon Mackintosh without siding with the accused against the accuser. Can it be generally useful to speak with indecent contempt of a man whom so many men of sense admired, and who is no longer in the land of the living?

I should not scruple to draw upon your good-nature and kindness if I had any occasion to do so; but as to my French journey, the only use you can be of to me is, to be as amiable and agreeable when I see you at Boulogne, as I have found you on this side the water. I can only say a few winged words, and leave you a flying benediction, as I am going by Rouen, and mean to see a great deal in a little time. By the by, I want to find a good sleeping-place between Rouen and Paris, as I wish to arrive at Paris in the day, time enough to find good quarters.

* Mrs Sydney's maid would not accompany her to France, from fear of the sea.—ED.

We have had charming weather; and all who come here, or have been here, have been delighted with our little paradise,—for such it really is; except that there is no serpent, and that we wear clothes. God bless you, dear Mrs ——! My best and most friendly wishes attend you always. S. S.

361.] TO MRS ——.

Combe Florey, Sept. 7, 1835.

Health to Mrs ——, and happiness, and agreeable society, carelessness for the future, and enjoyment of the present!

Who can think of your offer now, and before, but with kindness and gratitude? My brother, who loves paradoxes, says, if he saw a man walking into a pit, he would not advise him to turn the other way. My plan is, on the contrary, to advise, to interfere, to remonstrate, at all hazards. I hate cold-blooded people, a tribe to which you have no relation; and the brother who talks this nonsense would not only stop the wanderer, but jump halfway down the pit to save him. We will go by the Lower Road. The consequence of all this beautiful weather will be, our liquefaction in our French expedition.

I send you a list of all the papers written by me in the Edinburgh Review. Catch me, if you can, in any one illiberal sentiment, or in any opinion which I have need to recant; and that, after twenty years' scribbling upon all subjects.

Lord John Russel comes here next week with Lady John. He has behaved prudently, but the thing is not yet over. I am heartily glad of the prospect of agreement. Who, but the idiots of the earth, would fling a country like this into confusion, because a Bill (in its mutilated state a great improvement) is not carried as far, and does not embrace as much, as the best men could wish? Is political happiness so cheap, and political improvement so easy, that the one can be sported with, and the other demanded, in this style? God bless you, dear Mrs ——! From your friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

362.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 11, 1835.

My dear Lady Grey,

Your letter gave me great pleasure,—the pleasure of being cared about by old and good friends, and the pleasure of seeing that they know I care about them. Lord Grey has met with that reception which every honest and right-minded man felt to be his due. If I had never known him, and lived in the North, I should have come

out to wave my bonnet as he passed. He may depend upon it he has played a great part in English history, and that the best part of the English people entertain for him the most profound respect. And now, for the rest of life, let him trifle and lounge, and do everything which may be agreeable to him, and drink as much wine as he dare, and not be too severe in criticising himself.

We have had Scarlett and Denman here: the former, an old friend of mine; Denman everybody likes.

I don't know whether you have the same joy, but I am heartily glad the fine weather is over; it totally prevented me from taking exercise, and therefore, from being as well as I otherwise should have been. Lord and Lady John Russell came here on Monday. On the 22d I go to 25 Lower Brook Street, and on the 28th we go to Paris for a month, Mrs Sydney, and Mr and Mrs Hibbert, and myself. I have not the least wish to see Paris again, but go to show it to Mrs Sydney. I think every wife has a right to insist upon seeing Paris. It would give me some pleasure to talk with the King of France for half an hour.

We all (I take it for granted) rejoice at the wise decision of the Government. They would have lost character if they had given up the Bill, and embroiled the country for an object so trifling. O'Connell's letter to the Duke of Wellington is dreadfully scurrilous, but there are in it some distressing truths. The state of America will help the Tories, and diffuse a horror of mobs.

I have (heat excepted) spent an agreeable summer with my two daughters and all their families,—seven grandchildren. It will give me great pleasure to hear that Lord Grey and you have been and are well and happy. SYDNEY SMITH.

363.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Abbeville, Oct. 2, 1835.

My dear Lady Holland,

You, who are always good and kind to me, were so obliging as to say I might write to you, and inform you how we got over. Nothing could be worse.

. . .

The weather has been horrible, the country is execrable, the travelling is very slow and tedious. To-morrow we go from this town to Rouen, and shall be in Paris on Wednesday.

There is a family of English people living here who have been here for five years. They stopped to change horses, liked the place, and have been here ever since: father, mother, two handsome daughters, and some young children. I should think it not unlikely that one of the daughters will make a nuptial alliance with

the waiter, or give her hand to the son of the landlord, in order to pay the bill.

I saw Sebastiani at Calais setting off with the dry-nurse of the Duc de Nemours in a *calèche*, which any of your Kensington tradesmen would have disdained to enter. There is a blessed contempt of appearances in France.

We are well, and are going to sit down to a dinner at five francs a-head. We are going regularly through the Burgundy wines,—the most pernicious, and of course the best: Macon the first day, Chablis the second—both excellent; to-day Volnay. S. S.

364.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

Rouen, Oct. 6, 1835.

My dearest Child,

—— fell ill in London, and detained us a day or two. At Canterbury, the wheel would not turn round; we slept there, and lost our passage the next day at Dover: this was Wednesday,—a day of mist, fog, and despair. It blew a hurricane all that night, and we were kept awake by thinking of the different fish by which we should be devoured on the following day. I thought I should fall to the lot of some female porpoise, who, mistaking me for a porpoise, but finding me only a parson, would make a dinner of me. We were all up and at the quay by five in the morning. The captain hesitated very much whether he would embark, and your mother solicited me in pencil notes not to do so; however, we embarked,—the French Ambassador, ourselves, twenty Calais shopkeepers, and a variety of all nations. The passage was tremendous: Hibbert had crossed four times, and the courier twenty; I had crossed three times more, and we none of us ever remember such a passage. I lay along the deck, wrapped in a cloak, shut my eyes, and, as to danger, reflected that it was much more apparent than real; and that, as I had so little life to lose, it was of little consequence whether I was drowned, or died, like a resident clergyman, from indigestion. Your mother was taken out more dead than alive.

We were delighted with the hotel of Dessein, at Calais; eggs, butter, bread, coffee—everything better than in England—the hotel itself magnificent. We all recovered, and stayed there the day; and proceeded to sleep at Montreuil, forty miles, where we were still more improved by a good dinner. The next day, twenty miles farther, to Abbeville; from thence, sixty miles the next day to this place, where we found a superb hotel, and are quite delighted with Rouen; the churches far exceed anything in England in richness of architectural ornament. The old buildings of Rouen are most interesting. All that I refuse to see is, where particular things

were done to particular persons;—the square where Joan of Arc was burnt,—the house where Corneille was born. The events I admit to be important; but, from long experience, I have found that the square where Joan of Arc was burnt, and the room where Corneille was born, have such a wonderful resemblance to other rooms and squares, that I have ceased to interest myself about them.

To-morrow we start for Mantes, and the next day we shall be at Paris. Travelling is extremely slow—five miles an hour. I find the people now as I did before, most delightful; compared to them we are perfect barbarians. Happy the man whose daughter were half as well-bred as the chambermaid at Dessein's, or whose sons were as polished as the waiter! Whatever else you do, insist, when Holland brings you to France, on coming to Rouen; there is nothing in France more worth seeing. Come to Havre, and by steam to Rouen. God bless you, dear child! Give my love to Froggy and Doggy. Your affectionate father, SYDNEY SMITH.

365.] TO MRS ——.

Hôtel de Londres, Place Vendôme, Sunday, Oct. 11, 1835.

Dear Mrs ——,

. . . . . .

At Calais, we were delighted with Dessein's Hotel, and admired the waiter and chambermaid as two of the best-bred people we had ever seen. The next sensation was at Rouen. Nothing (as you know) can be finer;—Beautiful country, ships, trees, churches, antiquities, commerce,—everything which makes life interesting and agreeable. I thank you for your advice, which sent me by the Lower Road to Paris. My general plan in life has been to avoid low roads, and to walk in high places, but from Rouen to Paris is an exception.

The Ambassador lent us his box yesterday, and I heard Rubini and Grisi, Lablache and Tamburini. The opera, by Bellini, "I Puritani," was dreadfully tiresome and unintelligible in its plan. I hope it is the last opera I shall ever go to.

We are well lodged in an hotel with a bad kitchen. I agree in the common praise of the French living. Light wines and meat thoroughly subdued by human skill, are more agreeable to me than the barbarian Stonehenge masses of meat with which we feed ourselves. Paris is very full. I look at it with some attention, as I am not sure I may not end my days in it. I suspect the fifth act of life should be in great cities; it is there, in the long death of old

age, that a man most forgets himself and his infirmities; receives the greatest consolation from the attentions of friends, and the greatest diversion from external circumstances.

Pray tell me how often the steam-boats go from Boulogne; whether every day, or, if not, what days; and when the tides will best serve, so as to go from harbour to harbour, in the week beginning the twenty-fifth of October. Pray excuse this trouble. I have always compunctions in asking you to do anything useful; it is as if one were to use blonde lace for a napkin, or to drink toast and water out of a ruby cup;—a clownish confusion of what is splendid and what is serviceable. Sincerely and respectfully yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

366.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Paris, Oct. 20, 1835.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am sure the pleasantest thing that you and Lord Grey and Georgiana could do, would be to go to Paris for May and June. It would not cost more than life in London, and would be to you a source of infinite amusement and pleasing recollections. Our excursion here has given Mrs Sydney the greatest gratification. We have seen the outside of Paris thoroughly. I think Lord and Lady Carlisle both improved in health; they are to stay here the winter.

I have seen Madame de —— once or twice, but I never attempt to speak to her, or to go within six yards of her. I am aware of her abilities, and of the charms of her conversation and manner to those whom it is worth her while to cultivate; but to *us others*, she is, as it were, the Goddess Juno, or some near relation to Jove.

The French are very ugly; I have not seen one pretty French woman. I am a convert to the beauty of Lady ——; her smile is charming. Paris swarms with English. Lord Granville was forced to go up five pair of stairs to find Lord Canterbury. In another garret, equally high, was lodged Lord Fitzgerald. I care very little about dinners; but I acquiesce thoroughly in all that has been said of their science. I shall not easily forget a *matelote* at the Rochers de Cancale, an almond tart at Montreuil, or a *poulet à la Tartare* at Grignon's. These are impressions which no changes in future life can obliterate. I am sure they would have sunk deeply into the mind of Lord Grey; I know nobody more attentive to such matters.

The King's best friends here hardly understand what he is at. I suppose he thinks that, with a free press, nothing could save France from anarchy: perhaps he may be right. I believe him to be a virtuous and excellent man.

We have had bad weather. We leave Paris to-morrow, and shall be in London on the 25th or 26th. Lord William Bentinck is in our hotel, endeavouring to patch up a constitution broken by every variety of climate. I find him a plain, unaffected, sensible man.

Always, dear Lady Grey, with sincere respect and affection, yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

367.] TO MRS ——.

Many thanks, dear Mrs ——, for the Review, which I conclude to be yours, and which I read with pleasure; but I wish you great philosophers would condescend to tell us *what* and *how much* you propose to teach; what the real advantages are which society is likely to reap from education, and whether the dangers which many apprehend are not imaginary. You take all the good for granted, and all the idea of evil as exploded. Whereas, education has many honest enemies; and many honestly doubt and demur, who do not speak for fear of being assassinated by Benthamites, who might think it, upon the whole, more useful that such men should die than live. SYDNEY SMITH.

368.] TO LORD MURRAY.

Weymouth Street, Portland Place, Nov. 6, 1835.

No news. All the Ministers meet here on the 12th. John Russell is to make a great splash at Bristol; they began laying the cloth ten days ago. I was invited, but I have done with agitation. I see Lord John means to spare the House of Lords.

Everybody here is delighted with Mackintosh's Life, and is calling out for more letters and diaries. I think Robert Mackintosh has done it very well, by putting in as little mortar as possible between the layers of stone.

We are all pleased with our Paris excursion. The Liberals, particularly the Flahaults, do not know what to make of the last measures. If they had only been temporary, there would not have been a dissentient voice. S. S.

369.] TO GEORGE PHILIPS, ESQ.

November 23, 1835.

My dear Philips,

I have bought a house in Charles Street, Berkeley Square (lease for fourteen years), for £1400, and £10 per annum ground-rent. It is near the chapel in John Street where I used to preach. I was tired of looking out for ready-furnished houses. We are five

minutes from the Park, five minutes from you, and ten minutes from Dr Holland.

All the Ministers are in town, and I meet them almost every day somewhere or another; but hear nothing of importance, and have no wish to hear anything. They are going on with the reformation of the Church; and the Ministers think that the members of the Commission put in by Peel are quite in earnest, and willing to do the thing fairly.

In calling this morning, I met Lady Davy, Mrs Marcet, and Mrs Somerville in the same room. I told them I was the Shepherd Paris, and that I was to give an apple to the wisest. I congratulated Whishaw on coming out of W—— House unmarried. He says he does not know that he is unmarried, but rather thinks he is. Time will show if any one claims him.

I ought to have the gout, having been in the free use of French wines; and as Nature is never slow in paying these sort of debts, I suppose I shall have it.

SYDNEY SMITH.

370.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

December 11, 1835.

My dearest Child,

Few are the adventures of a Canon travelling gently over good roads to his benefice. In my way to Reading I had, for my companion, the Mayor of Bristol when I preached that sermon in favour of the Catholics. He recognised me, and we did very well together. I was terribly afraid that he would stop at the same inn, and that I should have the delight of his society for the evening; but he (thank God!) stopped at the Crown, as a loyal man, and I, as a rude one, went on to the Bear. Civil waiters, wax candles, and off again the next morning, with my friend and Sir W. W——, a very shrewd, clever, coarse, entertaining man, with whom I skirmished *à l'aimable* all the way to Bath. At Bath, candles still more waxen, and waiters still more profound. Being, since my travels, very much gallicised in my character, I ordered a pint of claret; I found it incomparably the best wine I ever tasted; it disappeared with a rapidity which surprises me even at this distance of time. The next morning, in the coach by eight, with a handsome valetudinarian lady, upon whom the coach produced the same effect as a steam-packet would do. I proposed weak warm brandy and water; she thought, at first, it would produce inflammation of the stomach, but presently requested to have it warm and *not* weak, and she took it to the last drop, as I did the claret. All well here. God bless you, dearest child! Love to Holland.

SYDNEY SMITH.

371.] TO SIR WILMOT HORTON, BART.

December, 1835.

Dear Wilmot Horton,

I have been to Paris with Mrs Sydney, and Mr and Mrs Hibbert. We saw all the cockney sights, and dined at all the usual *restaurants*, and vomited as usual into the channel which divides Albion from Gallia. Rivers are said to run blood after an engagement; the Channel is discoloured, I am sure, in a less elegant and less pernicious way by English tourists going and coming. The King unpopular, beginning to do unwise things, which surprise the moderate Liberals; but the predominant feeling in France is a love of quiet, and a horror of improvements.

The manufactures of England are flourishing beyond example; there is no other distress but agricultural distress. Every hour that the Ministers stay in they are increasing their strength by the patronage which falls in. I think they will last over next session, and beyond that it would be rash to venture a prediction. I agree with them in everything they are doing. I think there never was such an Administration in this country. This, you will say, is the language of a person (or parson) who wants a bishopric; but, *nolo episcopari*. I dread the pomp, trifles, garments, and ruinous expense of the episcopal life; and this is lucky, as I have not the smallest reason for believing that any one has the most remote intention of putting the mitre on my head.

Our friend Frankland Lewis is gaining great and deserved reputation by his administration of the Poor Laws,—one of the best and boldest measures which ever emanated from any Government.

I hope you have read Mackintosh's Life, and that you like it. I think it a delightful book, and such is the judgment of the public. Where are there more important opinions on men, books, and events? They talk of a new edition, and another volume.

—— holds out, but is all claret, gravy, and puff-paste. I don't think there is an ounce of flesh and blood in his composition. Adieu, dear Horton! Come back. My love to my Lady. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

372.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

January 1, 1836.

My dear Lady Holland,

I send this day my annual cheese, of which I pray your acceptance. I hope it will prove as good as the last.

The papers all say you are going out; but I don't believe a word of it. I am very well and have no doubt you are so also; for there

is no disguising the fact, that you are really recovering your health. I denied it as long as I could, but it is too evident for discussion. There is no happiness in hard frost; at present there is a thaw.

The purchase of the "*Hole*"* is nearly completed. I shall come up a few days before Mrs Sydney, to furnish it, and make it ready for her reception. This will probably be in February. I have fallen into the duet life, and it seems to do very well. Mrs Sydney and I have been reading Beauvilliers' book on Cookery. I find, as I suspected, that garlic is power; not in its despotic shape, but exercised with the greatest discretion. S. S.

373.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

January 6, 1836.

My dear Murray,

It seems a long while since we have heard anything about you and yours, in which matters we always take a very affectionate concern. I saw a good deal of the Ministers in the month of November, which I passed (as I always do pass it) in London. I see no reason why they should go out, and I do not in the least believe they are going. I think they have done more for the country than all the Administrations since the Revolution. The Poor-Law Bill alone would immortalise them. It is working extremely well.

I see you are destroying the Scotch Church. I think we are a little more popular in England than we were. Before I form any opinion on Establishments, I should like to know the effect they produce on vegetables. Many of our clergy suppose that if there was no Church of England, cucumbers and celery would not grow; that mustard and cress could not be raised. If Establishments are connected so much with the great laws of nature, this makes all the difference; but I cannot believe it.

God bless you, dear Murray! SYDNEY SMITH.

374.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Jan. 11, 1836.

My dear Philips,

I hope you have escaped gout this winter; it is in vain to hope you have not deserved it. I have had none, and deserve none.

I have no doubt but that this Corporation Bill will produce excellent effects after the first year or two. The destruction of four or five hundred jobbing monopolies must carry with it very important

* A house Mr Smith had purchased in Charles Street, Berkeley Square.

improvements. There are some excellent passages in O'Connell's last letter to Burdett, where he praises the justice and impartiality of this Government in the administration of Irish affairs.

Whishaw retires from his office, and is to live between the two Romillys, or, as they call them, Romulus and Remus; I am sincerely glad of this arrangement. I sent you yesterday, through George, a printed list of my articles in the Edinburgh Review; they may make you laugh on a rainy day.

The bargain for my house is nearly finished. The lawyers discovered some flaw in the title about the time of the Norman Conquest; but, thinking the parties must have disappeared in the quarrels of York and Lancaster, I waived the objection. Not having your cheerfulness, the country *ennuies* me at this season of the year; and I have a large house and no children in it. I have not the slightest belief in the going out of the Ministry; I should as soon think of Drummond's white light going out.

W—— left behind him £100,000, with the following laconic account how he had acquired it by different diseases:—"Aurum catharticum, £20,000; aurum diureticum, £10,000; aurum podagrosum, £30,000; aurum apoplecticum, £20,000; aurum senile et nervorum, £10,000." But for the truth of this anecdote I vouch not.

I think we must adopt a daughter. SYDNEY SMITH.

375.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Feb. 1, 1836.

My dear Lady Grey,

I write a line to say that my tributary cheese is only waiting in Somersetshire, because you are waiting in Northumberland; and it will come to town to be eaten, as soon as it is aware that you are there to eat it. I hope that Lord Grey and you are well; no easy thing, seeing that there are about fifteen hundred diseases to which man is subject.

Without having thought much about them (and, as I have no part to play, I am not bound to think about them), I like all the Whigs have done. I only wish them to bear in mind, that the consequences of giving so much power to the people have not yet been tried at a period of bad harvest and checked manufactures. The prosperity of the country during all these changes has been without example.

Mrs Sydney and I have been leading a Darby-and-Joan life for these last two months, without children. This kind of life might have done very well for Adam and Eve in Paradise, where the

weather was fine, and the beasts as numerous as in the Zoological Gardens, and the plants equal to anything in the gardens about London; but I like a greater variety.

Mackintosh kept all his letters. He had a bundle of mine, which his son returned to me. I found a letter written thirty-five years ago, giving an account of my first introduction to Lord and Lady Holland. I sent it to Lady Holland, who was much amused by it. Your grateful and affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I had no idea that, in offering my humble caseous tribute every year, I should minister in so great a degree to my own glory. I bought the other day some Cheshire cheese at Cullam's, in Bond Street, desiring him to send it to Mr Sydney Smith's. He smiled, and said, "Sir, your name is very familiar to me." "No," I replied, "Mr Cullam, I am not Sir Sydney Smith, but Mr Sydney Smith." "I am perfectly aware of it," he said; "I know whom I am addressing; I have often heard of the cheeses you send to Lord Grey." So you see there is no escaping from fame.

376.] TO SIR WILMOT HORTON, BART.

Combe Florey, Feb. 8, 1836.

Dear Wilmot Horton,

I agree with the Whigs in all they are doing, and have only that mistrust which belongs to the subject of politics, and is inseparable from it. I see no probability of the Tories returning for any time to power. Public opinion is increasing in favour of the Whigs, who are, in my opinion, acting wisely, though boldly; nor do I see any great mistake they have committed.

I have bought a small house in Charles Street, Berkeley Square,—tired of taking a furnished house every year. I am going slowly down the hill of life. One evil in old age is, that as your time is come, you think every little illness is the beginning of the end. When a man expects to be arrested, every knock at the door is an alarm.

The welfare of the country is unexampled. Politicians should not forget that they have never tried the chances of bad harvests with checked manufactures.

Tufnell is become a great man, loaded with places and honours. Hay is in rather an awkward position,—a Tory in the midst of Whigs. I see him from time to time, and always like his society. I hear you have banished yourself till the year 1840. You will find me at that period at St Paul's, against the wall.

I think the Whigs have sent a good and safe man to ——. The only objection to him is, he looks so confoundedly melancholy,

that in any public calamity, he will scatter despair and impede the active virtues. I shall be very glad to see you and yours.

SYDNEY SMITH.

377.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

February 28, 1836.

My dear Philips,

You say I have many comic ideas rising in my mind; this may be true; but the champagne bottle is no better for holding the champagne. Don't you remember the old story of Carlin, the French harlequin? It settles these questions. I don't mean to say I am prone to melancholy; but I acknowledge my weakness enough to confess that I want the aid of society, and dislike a solitary life.

Thomas Brown was an intimate friend of mine, and used to dine with me regularly every Sunday in Edinburgh. He was a Lake poet, a profound metaphysician, and one of the most virtuous men that ever lived. As a metaphysician, Dugald Stewart was a humbug to him. Brown had real talents for the thing. You must recognise, in reading Brown, many of those arguments with which I have so often reduced you to silence in metaphysical discussions. Your discovery of Brown is amusing. Go on! You will detect Dryden if you persevere; bring to light John Milton, and drag William Shakspeare from his ill-deserved obscurity!

The Whigs seem to me stronger than ever; I agree in all their measures. I have no doubt about Irish Municipalities.

SYDNEY SMITH.

378.] TO MRS MURCHISON.

No date.

Dear Madam,

I am not formally, but *really* obliged to you for this sketch of Grattan. It is so well expressed, that I suspect it to be your own.

Mrs Sydney is very unwell; and I am at St Paul's, going and coming, all the morning. As soon as I am free, and she is well, we will leave our cards at your door, if you will not let us in. I say cards, but *I* shall leave a specimen,—strontian, or greywacke, or something indicative of my respect for Geology and you.

Very truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

379.] TO MRS ——.

July, 1836.

Dear Mrs ——,

I shall have great pleasure in calling for you to go to Mrs

Charles Buller, on Wednesday. Mrs Sydney's arm is rather better; many thanks for the inquiry.

Very high and very low temperature extinguishes all human sympathy and relations. It is impossible to feel affection beyond 78°, or below 20° of Fahrenheit; human nature is too solid or too liquid beyond these limits. Man only lives to shiver or to perspire. God send that the glass may fall, and restore me to my regard for you, which in the temperate zone is invariable.

SYDNEY SMITH.

380.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, July 30, 1836.

My dear Philips,

I had always heard that Buxton was the worst place in the world for gouty people, and I think it has proved itself so in your instance. What you call throwing out the gout, is all nonsense. You had the gout a little; after a certain time it would have disappeared; but you go to Buxton, it becomes worse, and then you and Dr —— say, unphilosophically, that the gout was in you before, and has been thrown out. I should think better of Dr —— if he had not been discovered by ——. The land *he* discovers is very apt to be a fog-bank.

I have been, as you see, fighting with bishops at Ephesus. We have procured a suspension of the Bill; but the Whigs have committed so great an error, in their subserviency to bishops, that I am afraid they must persevere. The lower clergy have been scandalously neglected by the Whig Government. But enough of this nonsense. I think the Administration will have a good majority on the Appropriation Clause, and I see no prospect of a change.

We stayed at Windsor a day. All that is worth seeing is seen in an hour: the outside of the Castle,—the view from the terrace,—and two or three state-rooms. We were unlucky enough to have particular introductions, and suffered as is usual on such occasions.

We are expecting some company, but the idea of filling a country-house with pleasant people is a dream; it all ends in excuses and disappointments, and nobody comes but the parson of the parish. It will give us great pleasure, my dear Philips, to hear you are better. Pray say it as soon as you can say so, and in the meantime believe me, with sincere affection, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

381.] TO MRS ——.

Combe Florey, Taunton, Sept. 15, 1836.

My dear Mrs ——,

I am afraid of delaying a day for fear you should be gone. I cannot imitate the lofty flights of Jeffrey, but I am, without metaphors, very sorry to lose the pleasures of your society.

We have a pleasant party staying here. I will write to you if I remain alive. If I am removed (as is the common fate of Canons) by an indigestion, retain some good-natured recollections of an ecclesiastic who knows your value. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

382.] TO SIR W. HORTON, BART.

Combe Florey, Sept., 1836.

My dear Wilmot Horton,

The same balance of parties remains, with a slight preponderance to the popular side. Peel plays his game with consummate skill and prudence, and I am inclined to say the same of Lord Lyndhurst and the House of Lords. The effect of their different measures upon the opinions of the country cannot be well measured, because the prosperity is so great that everybody is satisfied with almost any measure and any government. In the meantime the Whigs are carrying many measures, any one of which in the old system of things would have immortalised any Administration. Think of Tithes, Poor Law, and the Slave Trade: did you ever hope to see such things accomplished? John Russell, Sir George Grey, and Howick are the persons who have most risen in the world. I shall be very glad to see you and Lady Wilmot again in '38. I keep my health, and will try to keep it. Remember me, and let us meet as old friends when you return.

SYDNEY SMITH.

383.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

My dear Lady Ashburton,

On one day of the year, the Canons of St Paul's divide a little money—an inadequate recompense for all the troubles and anxieties they undergo. This day is, unfortunately for me, that on which you have asked me (the 25th of March), when we all dine together, endeavouring to forget for a few moments, by the aid of meat and wine, the sorrows and persecutions of the Church. I am sure Lord Ashburton and yourself, and your son Francis, feel for us as you ought to do. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

384.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

[With a Print.]

Dear Lady Ashburton,

Miss Mildmay told me yesterday that you had been looking about for a print of the Rev. Sydney Smith. Here he is,—pray accept him. I said to the artist, "Whatever you do, preserve the orthodox look." Ever truly yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

385.] TO COLONEL FOX.

October, 1836.

My dear Charles,

If you have ever paid any attention to the habits of animals, you will know that donkeys are remarkably cunning in opening gates. The way to stop them is to have two latches instead of one: a human being has two hands, and lifts up both latches at once: a donkey has only one nose, and latch *a* drops, as he quits it to lift up latch *b*. Bobus and I had the grand luck to see little Aunty engaged intensely with this problem. She was taking a walk, and was arrested by a gate with this formidable difficulty: the donkeys were looking on to await the issue. Aunty lifted up the first latch with the most perfect success, but found herself opposed by a second; flushed with victory, she quitted the first latch and rushed at the second: her success was equal, till in the meantime the first dropped. She tried this two or three times, and, to her utter astonishment, with the same results; the donkeys brayed, and Aunty was walking away in great dejection, till Bobus and I recalled her with loud laughter, showed her that she had two hands, and roused her to vindicate her superiority over the donkeys. I mention this to you to request that you will make no allusion to this animal, as she is remarkably touchy on the subject, and also that you will not mention it to Lady Mary. I wish you would both come here next year. Always yours, my dear Charles, very sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

386.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

33 *Charles Street, Nov.* 10, 1836.

Health to you, my dear Lady Ashburton! May your daughters marry the wise and the good! And may your sons support our admirable Constitution in Church and State! May Lord Ashburton use in future steady horses and skilful coachmen; and may the friendship between you and Lady —— flame over the moral world, and shame, by its steady light, the fleeting and flickering passions of the human race!

I must stay here all this month, or, at least, till the 29th, or the week after; and which of these two weeks, I will let you know in two or three days. As to parties, I am the most comfortable guest in the world. I have not the slightest objection to meet everybody, nor the slightest wish to see anybody except you and yours.

Mr and Mrs —— dined at —— yesterday. I sat next to Mr ——. His voice faltered, and he looked pale: I did all I could to encourage him; made him take quantities of sherry. Mrs —— also looked very unhappy, and I had no doubt took the H. H. draught when she went home. You know, perhaps, that there is a particular draught which the London apothecaries give to persons who have been frightened at H. H. They will both tell you that they were not at all frightened, but don't believe them; I have seen so much of the disorder, that I am never mistaken. However, don't let me make you uneasy; it generally goes off after a day or two, and rarely does any permanent injury to the constitution.

Ever yours very truly, SYDNEY SMITH.

387.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

33 Charles Street, Nov. 25, 1836.

My dear Murray,

I leave London on the 1st of December for Combe Florey, and should have done so before, but we, the Cathedrals, are fighting the Bishops; and as I am ringleader, I have been forced to remain. I observe with pleasure the rising spirit of the Cathedrals, which have been abominably ill-used.

I see nothing as yet which is to disturb the Whigs. Public opinion is decidedly in their favour. The only two faults they have committed are, meddling too much in the private concerns of other nations, and John Russell's passion for Bishops.

It is, I believe, settled that Parliament is to meet very early this year,—I should say, the middle of January,—a very wise measure, if it abridge the duration of the summer session; but the question is, if they will not go on legislating till stinks and sunbeams drive them out of London. SYDNEY SMITH.

388.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Dec. 22, 1836.

Dear Sir George,

I stayed a day or two at Lord Ashburton's in my way down. To be in a Tory house is like being in another planet. I don't believe a word about the Whigs going out; why should they?

Give my love to Julia. The weather is beautiful; but, as Noodle says (with his eyes beaming with delight), "We shall suffer for this,

Sir, by and by." We are going on with our war against the Bishops, and I shall write a pamphlet upon it, which neither you nor George will read, but Julia will, I think; I should like to reason the matter with her.

I have read "Astoria" with great pleasure; it is a book to put in your library, as an entertaining, well written—*very* well written—account of savage life, on a most extensive scale. Ellice, who has just come from America, says Mr Astor is worth £5,000,000 sterling; but Baring does not believe it, or is jealous perhaps.

. . . . . .

I have had no gout, nor any symptom of it; by eating little, and drinking only water, I keep body and mind in a serene state, and spare the great toe. Looking back at my past life, I find that all my miseries of body and mind have proceeded from indigestion. Young people in early life should be thoroughly taught the moral, intellectual, and physical evils of indigestion. Love to all. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

389.] *From the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville.*

Cleveland Square, Jan. 14, 1837.

My dear Sir,

The letter to Archdeacon Singleton, for which I have to thank the author, did not require the printed name upon the title-page. The lively talent, sound argument, and genuine humour of the fifty pages which have so much interested me, could have been derived from no pen but one. You have cut it somewhat sharply, but, I believe, not more so than was requisite to give it any useful effect. I am sanguine enough to hope good from it, though I am surprised at myself for any such feelings in times which seem to suggest fear only. Ever, my dear Sir, in times good or bad, very truly yours,

THOMAS GRENVILLE.

390.] *From the late Archdeacon Singleton.*

Alnwick Castle, Feb. 3, 1837.

My dear Sir,

You may suppose that I have long since read your letter with the greatest interest and admiration: but I would not write to you till I could learn how it would make its way with such persons and parties as came under my cognizance. The result of my inquiries has been most satisfactory. It sells in country book-shops, where the question was never known or considered, till you gave life and spirit, as well as argument, to the discussion. High Tories indeed regret the exposure of the Bishops, but in the same breath admit

the justice and necessity of it; whilst the Whigs, being now compelled to repudiate the errors of the Commission, have left it powerless, and, if we believe the "Times," almost a "*caput mortuum.*"

That a serious impression has been made there can be no doubt; and forgive me if I say that *you*, who have done so much, may yet do more. Could you not see Lord —— privately and in confidence, before the 16th of February (for which day notice for his motion on this subject has been given), and urge upon him such an alteration and increase of the Commission, as, in the spirit of justice and impartiality, may effect such a reform as will propitiate the public without violating the honest feelings, and much less the oaths and consciences, of the clergy? There never has been and there never will be again, so fair and fit an opportunity for practical amendment. The profession is ready and expectant. The public, calm, and perhaps indifferent. There is neither impatience within, nor pressure from without. If this opportunity of correcting abuses and modifying anomalies be now lost, it will occur no more in our generation.

Frankly, it seems to me that *you* have a chance of more effectually serving and saving the Church of England than any individual has ever enjoyed. I remain, my dear Sir, ever yours, with esteem and regard, TH. S. SINGLETON.

391.] TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

April 3, 1837.

My dear John,

At eleven o'clock in the morning, some years ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury called upon a friend of mine (my informant) and said, "I am going to the King (George III.) to meet Perceval, who wants to make Mansell Bishop of Bristol. I have advised the King not to assent to it, and he is thoroughly determined it shall not be. I will call in an hour or two, and tell you what has passed." Canterbury did not return till eleven at night. "Quite in vain," he said; "Perceval has beaten us all; he tendered his immediate resignation. 'If he were not considered to be a fit person for recommending the dignitaries of the Church, he was not a fit person to be at the head of the Treasury.' After a conflict carried on all day, we were forced to yield."

Such a conflict, carried on once, and ending with victory, never need be repeated.

I know not, by alluding to the chess-board, whether you mean the charges which —— might make against me, or against liberal men in general. I defy —— to quote a single passage of my writ-

ing contrary to the doctrines of the Church of England; for I have always avoided speculative, and preached practical, religion. I defy him to mention a single action in my life which he can call immoral. The only thing he could charge me with, would be high spirits, and much innocent nonsense. I am distinguished as a preacher, and sedulous as a parochial clergyman. His real charge is, that I am a high-spirited, honest, uncompromising man, whom all the bench of Bishops could not turn, and who would set them all at defiance upon great and vital questions. This is the reason why (as far as depends upon others) I am not a bishop; but I am thoroughly sincere in saying I would not take any bishopric whatever, and to this I pledge my honour and character as a gentleman. But, had I been a bishop, you would have seen me, on a late occasion, charging —— and —— with a gallantry which would have warmed your heart's blood, and made Melbourne rub the skin off his hands.

Pretended heterodoxy is the plea with which the Bishops endeavoured to keep off the bench every man of spirit and independence, and to terrify *you* into the appointment of feeble men, who will be sure to desert you (as all your bishops have lately and shamefully done) in a moment of peril. When was there greater clamour excited than by the appointment of ——, or when were there stronger charges of heterodoxy? Lord Grey disregarded all this, and they are forgotten. . . . . Believe me to be, dear John, sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—Make Edward Stanley and Caldwell, a friend of Lord Lansdowne's and mine, bishops; both unexceptionable men.

392.] TO MASTER HUMPHREY MILDMAY.

April 30, 1837.

I am very sorry to hear you have been so ill. I have inquired about you every day, till I heard you were better. Mr Travers is a very skilful surgeon, and I have no doubt you will soon be well. In the Trojan War, the Greek surgeons used cheese and wine for their ointments, and in Henry the Eighth's time cobbler's wax and rust of iron were the ingredients; so, you see, it is some advantage to live in Berkeley Square, in the year 1837.

I am going to Holland, and I will write to you from thence to tell you all I have seen, and you will take care to read my letter to Mr Travers. In the meantime, my dear little Humphrey, I wish you most heartily a speedy recovery, and God bless you!

S. S.

393.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

The Hague, Friday, May 12, 1837.

Dear Lady Grey,

Never come into Holland. If Lord Grey solicits you to do so, let him solicit in vain. The roads all paved—inns dirty, and dearer than the dearest in England—country frightful beyond all belief; no trees but willows—no fuel but turf; all the people uglier than ——.

I have had a slight fit of the gout, a warning which shall bring me back sooner than I intended; because it is a question put to me by my constitution, "What business has such an ancient gentleman as you to be making tours, and to be putting yourself out of your ordinary method of living?" I have patched myself up for the present, and am going to-morrow to Amsterdam; I hope to be at Brussels on my way back (either home or to the Rhine, as I feel myself) on Wednesday, the 17th. I find about one quarter of the things worth seeing which are said to be so. For instance, at the Hague (whence I write) there is nothing which need detain an Englishman (who has seen everything in his own country) three hours, and I was advised to stay there three days. The best thing in Holland is the bread—the worst thing the water. A Dutch baker (*brood-bakker*) would make his fortune in London.

Madame Falk has lately had a paralytic stroke, but is recovered. Falk is ill, I believe, with the gout, and could not see me.

My journey will confirm me in the immense superiority of England over the rest of the world; and Lord Grey and you are the best people in it, and I have a great affection for you both.

S. S.

394.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Brussels, May 20, 1837.

My dear Philips,

A detestable country all the way from Calais to Amsterdam. Fine cities—admirable architects, far exceeding us, both in their old and new buildings—good bakers—very ugly—stink of tobacco—horses all fat—soldiers little—inns dirty, and very expensive;—better modern painters than we are.

I went to the Belgic Parliament. There was a pound short in the public accounts, and they were speaking about it. Our friend Van de Weyer has been very hospitable and civil to us. He sails for England to-day, and there is no idea of his taking office. He prefers the English embassy to any other situation, and I am very glad of it. I like his mother,—a very good-hearted, amiable old lady.

The finest city I have seen is Amsterdam; I was much struck with its commercial grandeur. The only city I could live in, of all I have seen, is the city of Brussels. All the great cities of Flanders are under-peopled.

We dined yesterday with Sir Hamilton Seymour; a dinner which consisted of all the accidental arrivals at Brussels, and went off well enough. He seems good-natured and obliging, and the female ambassador is pretty. SYDNEY SMITH.

395.] TO MRS MURCHISON.

June 8, 1837.

Engaged, my dear Madam, to Sir George Philips, or should have been too happy; will come in the evening, if possible.

I am surprised that an archbishop, living in an alluvial country, should be at your table. Are there no bishops among the Silurian rocks? Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

396.] TO MISS BERRY.

Combe Florey, July 31, 1837.

Are you well? that is the great point. When do you mean to come and pay us a visit? The general rumour of the times is, that you are tired to death of the country, and that nothing will ever induce you to try it again; that you bought a rake, and attempted to rake the flower-beds, and did it so badly that you pulled up all the flowers. It is impossible, as they say also, to get into the Lindsay the smallest acquaintance with the vegetable world; and that, if it were not for the interference of friends, she would order the roses to be boiled for dinner, and gather a cauliflower as a nosegay.

Your friends the John Russells and Labouchere are here, talking of the sweet and sacred cause of liberty. I am getting innocent as fast as I can, and have already begun to dose my parishioners, which, as I do not shoot or hunt, is my only rural amusement.

Seriously speaking, my dear Miss Berry, you and Agnes and the Lindsay owe us a visit, and in your heart you cannot deny it. Remember me to Gulielma, your neighbour. Accept my benediction and affection. SYDNEY SMITH.

397.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Aug. 15, 1837.

My dear Lady Holland,

The sacred cause of sweet liberty has sufiered grievously here. There is a tremendous reaction. All our Whig candidates are disgraced, and despotism is the order of the day. Do you think the

Whigs will go on? The country is really in a worse state than before, because parties are still more finely balanced than before the dissolution. The topics urged against the Ministry (most foolishly and unjustly, but successfully) are O'Connell, the Church, and Poor Laws. Why don't you get some of your friends to put out a splendid and slashing defence?

I hope you and Lord Holland are in fair preservation. Lord and Lady John Russell were here, with a beautiful and well-disciplined child. The children of people of rank are generally much better behaved than other children. The parents of the former do not excel the parents of the latter in the same proportion, if they excel them at all.

Among our guests was Senior of Kensington, whose conversation is always agreeable to me. He is fond of reasoning on important subjects, and reasons calmly, clearly, and convincingly.

We expect Saba and Dr Holland the end of this or the beginning of next month. I am in great hopes we shall have some cases; I am keeping three or four simmering for him. It is enough to break one's heart to see him in the country; and that I should be his comforter in such a calamity is droll enough! Yours, dear Lady Holland, very affectionately, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I am delighted that you like my pamphlet; I tried all I could not to write it, but John Russell would make me do so, by refusing the fair terms I offered.

398.] TO ARTHUR KINGLAKE, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Sept. 30, 1837.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged by the present of your brother's book. I am convinced digestion is the great secret of life; and that character, talents, virtues, and qualities are powerfully affected by beef, mutton, pie-crust, and rich soups. I have often thought I could feed or starve men into many virtues and vices, and affect them more powerfully with my instruments of cookery than Timotheus could do formerly with his lyre. Ever yours very truly, SYDNEY SMITH.

399.] TO MRS ——.

November 9, 1837.

Ah, dear Lady! is it you? Do I see again your handwriting? and when shall I see yourself? (as the Irish say). You may depend upon it, all lives out of London are mistakes, more or less grievous;—but mistakes.

I am alone in London, without Mrs Smith, upon duty at St Paul's. London, however, is full, from one of these eternal dissolutions and re-assemblage of Parliaments, with which these latter days have abounded. I wish you were back again: nobody is so agreeable, so frank, so loyal, so good-hearted. I do not think I have made any new female friends since I saw you, but have been faithful to you. But I love excellence of all kinds, and seek and cherish it.

The Whigs will remain in; they are in no present danger. Did you read my pamphlet against the Bishops, and how did you like it?

I have not seen your friend Jeffrey for these two years. He did not come to town last year. I hear with the greatest pleasure of his fame as a judge.

I am going back to Combe Florey the end of the month, to remain till the beginning of March; and then in London for some months, where I sincerely hope to see you. To see you again will be like the resurrection of flowers in the spring; the bitterness of solitude, I shall say, is past. God bless you, dear Mrs ——!

SYDNEY SMITH.

400.] TO HIS EXCELLENCY M. VAN DE WEYER.

33 *Charles Street, Nov.* 27, 1837.

My dear Sir,

The evils of Combe Florey are its distance (150 miles), the badness of the season, the dulness and stupidity of a country parsonage in the winter. The goods of Combe Florey are, that our house is very warm and comfortable, and that Mr and Mrs Hibbert will be there on the 15th of December; that you can go nowhere where you are more valued, and that we shall be heartily glad to see you. Now take your choice, and tell me what your choice is; and let me know what I owe you for some charming wine; and believe me, yours sincerely, SYDNEY SMITH.

401.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1838.

Dear Lady Grey,

. . . . . .

I suppose you do not mean to be in town till after Easter. I shall be there the middle of next month. I was in town all November. The general notion was, that the Whigs were weakened; at the same time it is not easy to see how the ill temper of the Radicals will get them out. The Radicals will never dare to vote with the Tories, and on all Radical questions the Tories will vote with the Government. I see, by the report of the Church Commissioners for November last, that all the points for which the

Cathedrals contended are given up. This is very handsome on the part of the Commissioners; and their reform, whether wise or not, will at least be just.

I hope Lord Grey continues quite well; but quite well, I find, at sixty-seven, means about twelve or fourteen distinct ailments; weak eyes, a violent pain in the ankle, stomach slightly disordered, &c.

I have had a long correspondence with Lord John Russell about shutting St Paul's, which I have published, and would send you if it were a subject of any interest. Joseph Hume wants to make himself popular with the Middlesex electors; Lord John is afraid of Joseph Hume: hence all the correspondence.

I send you a list of my Papers in the Edinburgh Review. If you keep that journal, some of them may amuse you when you are out of spirits. Ever affectionately yours, S. S.

402.] TO R. MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ.

June 30, 1838.

My dear Sir,

If you want to get a place for a relation, you must not delay it till he is born, but make an application for him *in utero*, about the fifth or sixth month. The same with any smaller accommodation.

You ask for tickets on Wednesday, to go to St Paul's on Thursday, my first promise dating 1836! I would however have done my possible, but your letter did not arrive till Saturday (*paulo post*). The fact is, I have been wandering about the coast, for Mrs Sydney's health; and am taken by the Preventive Service for a brandy merchant, waiting an opportunity of running goods on a large scale.

I wish you many long and hot dinners with lords and ladies, wits and poets; and am always truly yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

403.] TO LADY DAVY.

July 7, 1838.

Dear Lady Davy,

Common-place, delivered in a boisterous manner, three miles off; and bad, tedious music. If you choose to expose yourself to this in cold blood, it becomes my duty to afford you the means of doing so; for which purpose I enclose, with my affectionate benediction, the order to the "virgins."

Pray excuse me from dining just now. I am possessed by a legion of devils. Accustomed to a hot climate, they are very active in warm weather. Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

404.] TO MISS G. HARCOURT.

Charles Street, 1838.

My dear Georgiana,

You see how desirous I am to do what you bid me. In general, nothing is so foolish as to recommend a medicine. If I am doing a foolish thing, you are not the first young lady who has driven an old gentleman to this line of action.

That loose and disorderly young man, E—— H——, has mistaken my wishes for my powers, and has told you that I proposed to do, what I only said I should be most happy to do. I have overstayed my time so much here, that I *must* hasten home, and feed my starving flock. I should have left London before, but how could I do so, in the pains and perils of the Church, which I have been defending at all moral hazards? Young tells me that nothing will induce the Archbishop to read my pamphlets, or to allow you to read them.

The summer and the country, dear Georgiana, have no charms for me. I look forward anxiously to the return of bad weather, coal fires, and good society in a crowded city. I have no relish for the country; it is a kind of healthy grave. I am afraid you are not exempt from the delusions of flowers, green turf, and birds; they all afford slight gratification, but not worth an hour of rational conversation; and rational conversation in sufficient quantities is only to be had from the congregation of a million of people in one spot. God bless you! SYDNEY SMITH.

405.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

About September, 1838.

My dear Philips,

You will be glad to hear that I have had a fit of the gout, but I cannot flatter you with its being anything very considerable. The Miss Berrys and Lady Charlotte Lindsay are here, and go to-morrow to Torquay. I have by this post had a letter from John Murray, who seems to rejoice in his Highland castle.

I have just written a pamphlet against Ballot, and shall publish it with my name at the proper time. I have done it to employ my leisure. No politics in it, but a *bonâ fide* discussion. I am an anti-ballotist. It will be carried, however, write I never so wisely.

Lord Valletort possessed of Mount Edgecumbe, and bent double with rheumatism! there is a balance in human conditions! Charles Wynne is a truly good man. Pray remember me very kindly to Lushington, and beg he will come, with all his family, Professor and all, to Combe Florey. The curses of Glasgow are, itch, punch,

cotton, and metaphysics. I hope Mr Lushington will discourage classical learning as much as he can.

Nickleby is very good. I stood out against Mr Dickens as long as I could, but he has conquered me.

Get, and read, Macaulay's Papers upon the Indian Courts and Indian Education. They are admirable for their talent and their honesty. We see why he was hated in India, and how honourable to him that hatred is. Your sincere friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

406.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, September, 1838.

Dear Lady Carlisle,

I see by the papers that you are going abroad, which is all wrong; but pray tell me how you and Lord Carlisle do, before you embark, and when you come back.

We have had a great succession here of literary ladies. The Berrys are gone to Torquay, which they pronounce to be the most beautiful place in England, or out of it. They stayed some time with us, and were agreeable and good-natured. Then came ——, who talked to me a good deal about war and cannons. I thought him agreeable, but am advised to look him over again when I return to London. Luttrell and Mrs Marcet are here now. —— is staying here, whom I have always considered as the very type of Lovelace in "Clarissa Harlowe." It is impossible, you know, to read an interesting book, and not to clothe the characters in the flesh and blood of living people. He is Lovelace; and who do you think is my imaginary Clarissa? A certain lady who has been at Castle Howard, whom, on account of her purity, I dare not name, sojourning in —— Street, and an admirer of yours, and a friend of mine. Who can it be?

I have written the pamphlet you ordered upon the Ballot; and as you love notoriety, I mean to dedicate it to you, with the most fulsome praise: virtues—talents—grace—elegance—illustrious ancestors—British feeling—mother of Morpeth—humble servant, &c. Your sincere and obliged friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

407.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, September, 1838.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you are all well and safe at Howick. I have never stirred an inch from this place since I came from town,—six weeks since: an incredible time to remain at one place. This absence of locomotion has however been somewhat secured by a fit of the gout,

from which I am just recovered; and which, under the old *régime*, and before the reign of colchicum, would have laid me up for ten weeks instead of ten days. I know you will quote against me Sir Oracle Hammick; but to him I oppose Sir Oracles Halford, Holland, Chambers, and Warren.

Have you, or has Lord Grey, been among the wise men at Newcastle? Headlam asked me to go; but, though I can endure small follies and absurdities, the nonsense of these meetings is too intense for my advanced years and delicate frame. One of the Bills for which I have been fighting so long has passed; and I have the satisfaction of seeing that every point to which I objected has been altered; so that I have not mingled in the affray for nothing.

Pray tell me about yourself, and whether you are tolerably well; but how can you be well, when you have so many children and so many anxieties afloat? How does dear Georgiana do?—that honest and transparent girl; so natural, so cheerful, so true! A moral flower, whom I always think of, when I sketch in my mind a garden of human creatures.

Read Dr Spry's "Account of India," and believe, if you can (I do), that within one hundred and fifty miles of Calcutta there is a nation of cannibals living in trees. It is an amusing book. Read, also, Macaulay's Papers upon Indian Education, and the Administration of Justice in India; but I hardly think you care about India.

We have never been a single day without company, principally blue-stocking ladies, whose society Lord Grey so much likes. Believe me, dear Lady Grey, your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

403.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

September 6, 1838.

If all the friends, dear Lady Holland, who have shared in your kindness and hospitality, were to give a little puff, you would be blown over to Calais with a gentle and prosperous gale. I admire your courage; and earnestly hope, as I sincerely believe, that you will derive great amusement and satisfaction, and therefore improved health, from your expedition.

I am out of temper with Lord Melbourne, and upon the subject of the Church; but in case of an election, I should vote, as I always have done, with the Whigs. As for little John, I love him, though I chastise him. I have never lifted up my voice against the Duke of Lancaster; I should be the most ungrateful of men if I did.

We have had a run of blue-stocking ladies to Combe Florey this summer, a race you despise. To me they are agreeable, and less

insipid than the general run of women; for *you know, my Lady, the female mind does not reason.* Kindest regards to the Duke of Lancaster. S. S.

409.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, December, 1838.

Awkward times, dear Lady Grey! However, you see those you love sooner than you otherwise would have seen them, and see them safely returned from a bad climate and disturbed country; and this is something, though not much. I do not see with whom Durham can coalesce. Not with Ministers, certainly; not with ——; not with Peel; scarcely with the Radicals. I see no light as to his future march. Will these matters bring Lord Grey up to town at the beginning of the session? I sincerely hope he may not think it necessary to place himself in such a painful and distressing situation. I think the Whigs are damaged, and that they will have considerable difficulty in the registration. The Hibberts are here, helping us to spend the winter; but nothing can make the country agreeable to me. It is bad enough in summer, but in winter is a fit residence only for beings doomed to such misery, for misdeeds in another state of existence.

On Sunday I was on crutches, utterly unable to put my foot to the ground. On Tuesday I walked four miles. Such is the power of colchicum! I shall write another letter about Church matters, and then take my leave of the subject; also, as I believe I told you before, a pamphlet against the Ballot.

What a strange affair is your Newcastle murder! it is impossible to comprehend it. I think you will want a cunning man from Bow Street. Believe me, dear Lady Grey, ever your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

410.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Feb. 11, 1839.

My dear Philips,

I hear from George you have the gout, and that you have had it longer than you ought. It will be some comfort to you to know that I have had rather a sharp fit, which has turned my walking into waddling and limping.

When do you come to town? We shall be there on the 21st. I have sent you a pamphlet on the Ballot, and shall next week publish another letter to Archdeacon Singleton, and with that end the subject. You will of course think my pamphlet on Ballot to be on the wrong side of the question, but I think we are on the way

to the Devil. The Government have very wisely flung your friend —— overboard.

I suspect Morpeth will be the new member of the Cabinet, perhaps the new Secretary for the Colonies. I presume Durham's statement was sent to the "Times" by himself.

You ought to be very thankful that you are one of those persons who are born happy. If you had but £200 per annum you would be happy. I have often said of you, that you are the happiest man, and the worst rider, I ever knew.

I shall not be sorry to be in town. I am rather tired of simple pleasures, bad reasoning, and worse cookery. Yours, my dear Philips, very sincerely, SYDNEY SMITH.

411.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Feb. 12, 1839.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

I have written a pamphlet upon the Ballot, and against it, and I would send it to you, but I know not how; therefore you had better get it in the ordinary way. It is published at Longman and Co.'s. Pray read it and tell me what you think of it. Only think of my being so good a boy as to write conservative pamphlets! Did you ever think I should come to this? One hole, you see, is made in the Ministry. Will it make such a leak as to sink the vessel, or will they stop it?

Give my love to your nice little daughter. Has she met yet with any dandy who has made her serious? Your affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

412.] TO RODERICK MURCHISON, ESQ.

March 30, 1839.

Dear Murchison,

I deny "that the old stratified rocks of Devonshire and Cornwall are the equivalents of the Carboniferous and Old Red Sandstone systems." I hold the Professor* and you to this rash assertion, and I am determined to answer you.

I am (whether you are right or wrong) very sorry you are going abroad. After I have answered you, I shall suspend my geological studies till you return; but perhaps I shall be suspended myself.

SYDNEY SMITH.

413.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Charles Street, April, 1839.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

The Government is always crazy, but I see no immediate

* Professor Sedgwick, who, with Mr Murchison, classified the rocks of Devonshire.

signs of dissolution. The success of my pamphlet has been very great. I always told you I was a clever man, and you never would believe me.

You must study Macaulay when you come to town. He is incomparably the first lion in the metropolis; that is, he writes, talks, and speaks better than any man in England.

Kind regards to your husband. SYDNEY SMITH.

414.] TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

Charles Street, Berkeley Square, June 11, 1839.

My dear Sir,

Nobody more, and more justly, talked of than yourself.

The Miss Berrys, now at Richmond, live only to become acquainted with you, and have commissioned me to request you to dine with them Friday, the 29th, or Monday, July 1st, to meet a Canon of St Paul's, the rector of Combe Florey, and the Vicar of Halberton,—all equally well known to you; to say nothing of other and better people. The Miss Berrys and Lady Charlotte Lindsay have not the smallest objection to be put into a Number, but, on the contrary, would be proud of the distinction; and Lady Charlotte, in particular, you may marry to Newman Noggs. Pray come; it is as much as my place is worth to send them a refusal.

SYDNEY SMITH.

415.] TO MRS GROTE.

33 *Charles Street, June* 24, 1839.

I will dine with you, dear Mrs Grote, on the 11th, with great pleasure.

The "Great Western" turns out very well,—grand, simple, cold, slow, wise, and good. I have been introduced to Miss ——; she abuses the privilege of literary women to be plain: and, in addition, has the true Kentucky twang through the nose, converting that promontory into an organ of speech. How generous the conduct of Mrs ——, who, as a literary woman, might be ugly if she choose, but is as decidedly handsome as if she were profoundly ignorant! I call such conduct honourable.

You shall have a real philosophical breakfast here; all mind-and-matter men. I am truly glad, my dear Mrs Grote, to add you to the number of my friends (*i.e.*, if you will be added). I saw in the moiety of a moment that you were made of fine materials, and put together by a master workman; and I ticketed you accordingly. But do not let me deceive you; if you honour me with your notice, you will find me a theologian and a bigot, even to martyrdom.

Heaven forbid I should deny the right of Miss ——, or of any other lady to ask me to dinner! the only condition I annex is, that you dine there also. As for any dislikes of mine, I would not give one penny to avoid the society of any man in England.

I do not preach at St Paul's before the first Sunday in July; send me word (if you please) if you intend to come, and I (as the Americans say) will locate you. But do not flatter yourself with the delusive hope of a slumber; I preach violently, and there is a strong smell of sulphur in my sermons. I could not get Lady —— to believe you did not know her; she evidently considered it affectation. Why do you not consult Dr Turnbull upon tic-douloureux? I told you a long story about it, of which, I thought at the time, you did not hear a single word.

Adieu, dear Mrs Grote! Always, with best compliments to Mr Grote, very sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

416.] TO MRS GROTE.

33 *Charles Street, July* 16, 1839.

Dear Mrs Grote,

I am very sorry you have suffered so much; mine is not society sorrow, but real sorrow. If there is a real sign of a fool, it is to offer a remedy. *Aconitine*—why do you so despise it as not to ask a question about it?

I am truly glad you like what I have written; then I have not written in vain. I send you a criticism on my three volumes, which, I confess, gave me a great deal of pleasure; pray return it to me. I have not the smallest idea who wrote it; but it is evidently written (my own vanity apart) by a very sensible man, and a good writer. Whether I have done what he says I have done, and am what he says I am, I do not know; but he has justly stated what I always aimed at, and what I wished to be. If I did not think you a very sensible woman, I would not run the risk of your thinking me vain; but I honestly confess that the praise and approbation of wise men is to me a very great pleasure.

I went last night to attend Mrs Sydney to the Eruption of Hecla at the Surrey Zoological; we saw a pasteboard mountain, ejecting crackers and squibs. The long standing has given me a fit of the gout, and that renders it rather doubtful whether we can come to you; but if I am well enough, we shall be most happy to do so. Let nothing ever persuade you to go to the Surrey Zoological in the evening. Mr Grote's subjects were intolerable.

I did not know Charles Austin was a sayer of good things; he has always seemed to me as something much better. Yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

417.] TO JOHN ALLEN, ESQ.

1839.

Dear Allen,

What is the effect of ballot on America and in France? My idea is, that in America nobody troubles himself how his inferiors vote, and that therefore it is a dead letter. Some States have it not; some who had it, have exchanged it for open voting. Am I right in these suppositions?

Tell me something of its effects in France, as between the representative and the constituent, and between the members of the Chamber and the Government. You will much oblige me by giving me some knowledge on these topics.

I had several fits of the gout of twelve hours' duration, and am now very well. SYDNEY SMITH.

418.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, September, 1839.

May I ask how my old friends do, and whether they are come back in good health and spirits?

I have done nothing since you went away but write little pamphlets; some, by your order, against Ballot, and others, by that of my own insubordinate spirit, against Bishops.

I think you will find the Whigs damaged. I date their fall in public estimation from their return to office after resignation. Gallantry and the chivalrous spirit are admirable in all the common courtesies of life; indispensable, when ladies are to be handed to their carriages, or defended from rudeness; but it ought not to meddle with politics. Most of the changes are bad. The appointment of —— will offend the aristocracy here, and the Canadians. There is no *prestige* in it. If good sense be the only thing wanted, send an attorney at 6*s.* 8*d.* per day. —— is a bad ingredient too.

We are both tolerably well. Mrs Sydney a little worse than her years,—myself a little better. SYDNEY SMITH.

419.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Charles Street, 1839.

My dear Lady Grey,

My news is, that Government are to beat Lord Stanley by four or five; and that, if beaten, they are not to go out. The threat of a dissolution has frightened some members into a support of the Government. It seems as if there were more danger of an American, than of a French war.

We arrived in town, taking eighty miles of the Bath railroad, with which I was delighted. Before this invention, man, richly en-

dowed with gifts of mind and body, was deficient in locomotive powers. He could walk four miles an hour, whilst a wild goose could fly eighty in the same time. I can run now much faster than a fox or a hare, and beat a carrier pigeon or an eagle for a hundred miles.

Had you the "Great Western," Mr Webster? and how did he answer? Lord Grey, I know, hates "lions."

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! SYDNEY SMITH.

I have written another letter to Archdeacon Singleton, which, together with my pamphlet on the Ballot, have had remarkable success, and are left for you in Berkeley Square.

420.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, Oct. 2, 1839.

Dear Mrs Grote,

You have not mentioned a subject which would give me more pleasure than any other,—your health. Your neighbours, the ——, have been staying here; they talked of you eulogically, in which I cordially joined; but when they came to details, I found they principally admired you for a recipe for brown bread, which is made by a baker near them according to your rules. I beg this recipe: and offer you, in return, a mode of curing hams. What a charming and sentimental commerce!

I cannot blame your decision, though I sincerely regret it; all excursions of that kind are promised upon the supposition of average moisture in the air, and average solidity in the soil. Your predictions, however, though legitimately founded on probabilities, are contrary to the fact. The weather is fine, and the country beautiful. I should be very glad if you were here; but what is deferred is not always lost. You have filled me with alarm about money, and I have buried a large sum in the garden; Heaven send I may not forget in what bed! But does not long continuation of bad weather produce low spirits in the rich? Is Dives not occasionally affected by the Lazarophobia?

I don't know whether I am right, but I am extremely pleased with Jones's work upon Rent; his style is admirable, his views always philosophical, and his explanations clear. You live in the midst of political economists; pray tell me what they say about him. It must not be forgotten that he is a parson; but as you overlook it in me, forgive it in him. I would not have mentioned this, but that I am sure you would have heard it from his enemies.

—— has the infirmity of deciding with the most fallacious

rapidity, upon all human subjects. Trevelyan is one of the first and most distinguished men in India.

Adieu! It would have been a real pleasure to me to see you here; pray come before you die, or rather, I should say, before I die. Ever, dear Mrs Grote, very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

421.] TO LORD HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Oct. 5, 1839.

My dear Lord Holland,

This is an extract of a letter from Grant, of Rothiemurchis, to his daughter, Mrs ——, a friend of mine, who begs I will apply to you in his favour; but you know him as well or better than I do; and as he is a man of very liberal opinions, and always *was* so, when it was ruinous to entertain liberal opinions, I have no doubt you will strive to advance him, if you think he has other proper requisites.

You have been through dangers of fire and water, I hope with impunity. Dr Holland is here,—at least I believe he is: for he is so locomotive, it is difficult to make similar assertions of him.

S. S.

422.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Green Street, October, 1839.

Dear Mrs Meynell,

I think the Whigs are certainly strengthened. Macaulay, if he speak as well as he did before India, must be considered an acquisition. Lord Clarendon, in all probability, a very important one. On the other side, they have had a great loss in Howick and Wood, and they lose three votes by the death of the two Dukes. They are in high spirits; and I have no doubt the Queen's marriage will be the first thing notified to the new Parliament. I have heard it from nobody, but I have no doubt of it.

I am quite delighted with my new house in Green Street. I have one leg in it, and the other here; it is everything I want or wish.

I feel for —— about her son at Oxford; knowing, as I do, that the only consequences of a University education are, the growth of vice and the waste of money.

I am in town all November. God bless you, dear friend!

SYDNEY SMITH.

423.] TO MRS ——.

Green Street, Nov. 4, 1839.

My dear Mrs ——,

Tell me a little about yourself. Where have you been? What have you been doing? How have you been faring?

I have been living very quietly in Somersetshire, and am now intensely occupied in settling my new house, which is the essence of all that is comfortable. Pray come and see it, if you come to town, and write me word before you come. I will give you very good mutton-chops for luncheon, seasoned with affectionate regard and respect.

My "Works" (such as they are) have had a very rapid sale, and I think before the end of the year will come to a second edition. Mrs Grote wrote me two or three letters in the course of the summer (which a certain person did not). She had half a mind to come to Combe Florey, but the other half was heavier and more powerful. What are your plans? I hope you have some regard for me; I have a great deal for you. Always affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

424.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

December 28, 1839.

I will dine with you on Saturday, my dear Lady Holland, with the greatest pleasure.

I have written against —— one of the cleverest pamphlets I ever read, which I think would cover —— and him with ridicule. At least it made me laugh very much in reading it; and there I stood, with the printer's devil, and the real devil close to me; and then I said, "After all, this is very funny, and very well written, but it will give great pain to people who have been very kind and good to me through life; and what can I do to show my sense of that kindness, if it is not by flinging this pamphlet into the fire?" So I flung it in, and there was an end! My sense of ill-usage remains of course the same. The dialogue between —— —— and —— is, or I should rather say, was, most admirable. SYDNEY SMITH.

425.] TO MRS CROWE.

January 6, 1840.

I am very glad to find, dear Mrs Crowe, that you are so comfortably arranged at Edinburgh. I am particulary glad that you are intimate with Jeffrey. He is one of the *best*, as well as the *ablest*, men in the country: and his friendship is to you, honour, safety, and amusement.

I hate young men, and I hate soldiers; but I will be gracious to ——, if he will call upon me.

Among the many evils of getting old, one is, that every little illness may probably be the last. You feel like a delinquent who knows that the constable is looking out after him. I am not going to live at Barnes, or to quit Combe Florey; if ever I do quit Combe

Florey, it will probably be to give up my country livings, and to confine myself to London only.

My "Works" are now become too expensive to allow of the dispersion and presentation of many copies, but I shall with pleasure order one for you: the bookseller will send it. I printed my reviews to show, if I could, that I had not passed my life merely in making jokes; but that I had made use of what little powers of pleasantry I might be endowed with, to discountenance bad, and to encourage liberal and wise, principles. The publication has been successful. The liberal journals praise me to the skies; the Tories are silent, grateful for my attack upon the Ballot. Yours truly,

SYDNEY SMITH.

426.] TO MRS ——.

Combe Florey, Jan. 23, 1840.

Dear, fair, wise,

Your little note gave me great pleasure, for I am always mightily refreshed when the best of my fellow-creatures seem to remember and care for me. To you, who give routs where every gentleman is a Locke or a Newton, and every lady a Somerville or a Corinne, the printed nonsense you have sent me must appear extraordinary; but to me, in the country, it is daily-bread nonsense, and of everlasting occurrence.

The birds, presuming on a few fine days, are beginning to make young birds, and the roots to make young flowers. Very rash! as rash as John Russell with his Privilege quarrel.

I have not read Carlyle, though I have got him on my list. I am rather curious about him.

I will come and see you as soon as I come to town; in the meantime, believe me your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

427.] TO MRS ——.

Green Street, April 8, 1840.

Dear Mrs ——,

I wish I may be able to come on Monday, but I doubt. Will you come to a philosophical breakfast on Saturday,—ten o'clock precisely? Nothing taken for granted! Everything (except the Thirty-nine Articles) called in question—real philosophers!

We shall have some routs and dinners in May, when I shall hope to see you. Many thanks, dear Mrs ——, for your kind expressions towards me. They are never (when they come from you) cast on barren and ungrateful soil. Affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—My carriage shall call for you to-morrow at a quarter past ten, at Mrs ——'s, whence we will proceed to that scene of simplicity, truth, and nature,—a London rout.

428.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Green Street, June, 1840.

Thy servant is threescore-and-ten years old; can he hear the sound of singing men and singing women? A Canon at the Opera! Where have you lived? In what habitations of the heathen? I thank you, shuddering; and am ever your unseducible friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

429.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

52 *Marine Parade, Brighton, June*, 1840.

My dear Lady Holland,

You will (because you are very good-natured) be glad to hear that Brighton is rapidly restoring Mrs Sydney to health. She gets better every three hours; and if she goes on so, I shall begin to be glad that Dr —— is not here.

I am giving a rout this evening to the only three persons I have yet discovered at Brighton. I have had handbills printed to find other London people, but I believe there are none. I shall stay till the 28th. You *must* allow the Chain Pier to be a great luxury; and I think all rich and rational people living in London should take small doses of Brighton from time to time. There cannot be a better place than this to refresh metropolitan gentleman and ladies, wearied with bad air, falsehood, and lemonade.

I am very deep in Lord Stowell's "Reports," and if it were war-time I should officiate as judge of the Admiralty Court. It was a fine occupation to make a public law for all nations, or to confirm one; and it is rather singular that so sly a rogue should have done it so honestly. Yours ever, SYDNEY SMITH.

430.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

June, 1840.

I choose to appear in your eyes a consistent and intelligent clergyman, and therefore must explain how I am at Brighton and in Berkeley Square at the same time on the 17th. I purpose to be at Brighton from the 14th to the 28th; coming up to eat off two or three engagements I had previously contracted, but not accepting any fresh engagements for that period. S. S.

431.] TO JOHN WHISHAW, ESQ.

Combe Florey, August 26, 1840.

My dear Whishaw,

I read the death of the Bishop of Chichester with sincere regret,—a thoroughly good and amiable man, and as liberal as a bishop is permitted to be. I am much obliged to you for mentioning those circumstances which marked his latter end, and made the spectacle less appaling to those who witnessed it. Milnes has been here; to him succeeded our friend Mrs Grote, who is now here, and very agreeable; she will remain with us, I hope, over Sunday.

I send you, by the post, my letter to the Bishop of London. It will not escape you that the King of Clubs was long in a state of spiritual destitution, as were the Edinburgh Reviewers,—all except me. Mrs Sydney is much better than she was this time last year; the ventilation she got at Brighton still continues to minister to her health. I am scarcely ever free from gout, and still more afflicted with asthma, but keep up my spirits. I am truly glad to hear such accounts of your health, and remain, my dear Whishaw, ever sincerely and affectionately yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

432.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

September 5, 1840.

I should be very glad to hear how all is going on at Castle Howard, dear Lady Carlisle, and whether my Lord and you keep up health and spirits with tolerable success;—a difficult task in the fifth act of life, when the curtain must erelong drop, and the comedy or tragedy be brought to an end.

Mrs Sydney is still living on the stock of health she laid up at Brighton; I am pretty well, except gout, asthma, and pains in all the bones, and all the flesh, of my body. What a very singular disease gout is! It seems as if the stomach fell down into the feet. The smallest deviation from right diet is immediately punished by limping and lameness, and the innocent ankle and blameless instep are tortured for the vices of the nobler organs. The stomach having found this easy way of getting rid of inconveniences, becomes cruelly despotic, and punishes for the least offences. A plum, a glass of champagne, excess in joy, excess in grief,—any crime, however small, is sufficient for redness, swelling, spasms, and large shoes.

I have found it necessary to give —— a valedictory flagellation. I know you and my excellent friend, Earl Carlisle, disapprove of these things; but you must excuse all the immense differences of temper, training, situation, habits, which make Sydney Smith one sort of person, and the Lord of the Castle another,—and both right

in their way. Lord Carlisle does not like the vehicle of a newspaper; but if a man want to publish what is too short for a pamphlet, what other vehicle is there? Lord Lansdowne, and Philpotts, and the Bishop of London make short communications in newspapers. The statement of duels is made in newspapers by the first men in the country. To write anonymously in a newspaper is an act of another description; but if I put my name to what I write, the mere vehicle is surely immaterial; and I am to be tried, not by *where* I write, but *what* I write. I send the newspaper.

Ah, dear Lady Carlisle! do not imagine, because I did not knock every day at your door, and molest you with perpetual inquiries, that I have been inattentive to all that has passed, and careless of what you and Lord Carlisle have suffered. I have a sincere respect and affection for you both, and shall never forget your great kindness to me. God bless and preserve you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

433.] TO LADY DAVY.

Green Street, Nov. 28, 1840.

Dear Lady Davy,

Do you remember that passage in the "Paradise Lost" which is considered so beautiful?—

> "As one who, long in populous cities pent,
> Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
> Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
> Among the pleasant villages and farms
> Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight;
> The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
> Or flowers: each rural sight, each rural sound.
> If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,
> What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more,
> *She* most; and in her look sums all delight."

I think this simile very unjust to London, and I have amended the passage. I read it over to Lady Charlotte Lindsay and the Miss Berrys. The question was, whom the gentleman should see first when he arrived in London: and after various proposals, it was at last unanimously agreed it must be *you*: so it stands thus:—

> "As one who, long in rural hamlets pent,
> Where squires and parsons deep potations make,
> With lengthen'd tale of fox, or timid hare,
> Or antler'd stag, sore vext by hound and horn,
> Forth issuing on a winter's morn, to reach
> In chaise or coach the London Babylon
> Remote, from each thing met conceives delight;
> Or cab, or car, or evening muffin-bell,
> Or lamps: each city sight, each city sound.
> If chance with nymph-like step the *Davy* pass,
> What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more,
> She most; and in her look sums all delight.

I tried the verses with names of other ladies, but the universal opinion was, in the conclave of your friends, that it must be you; and this told, now tell me, dear Lady Davy, how do you do? Shall we ever see you again? We are dying very fast here; come and take another look at us. Mrs Sydney is in the country, in rather bad health; I am (gout and asthma excepted) very well.

The sword is slowly and reluctantly returning into its scabbard. The Ministry hangs by a thread. We are alarmed by the Auckland war.

You are much loved here, and much lamented; and this is pleasant, even though thousands of miles intervene. I should be glad to know that anybody under the equator or the southern tropic held me in regard and esteem. SYDNEY SMITH.

434.] TO R. MURCHISON, ESQ.

Combe Florey, 1840.

Dear Murchison,

Many thanks for your kind recollections of me in sending me your pamphlet, which I shall read with all attention and care. My observation has been necessarily so much fixed on missions of another description, that I am hardly reconciled to zealots going out with voltaic batteries and crucibles, for the conversion of mankind, and baptizing their fellow-creatures with the mineral acids; but I will endeavour to admire, and believe in you. My real alarm for you is, that by some late decisions of the magistrates, you come under the legal definition of *strollers;* and nothing would give me more pain than to see any of the Sections upon the mill, calculating the resistance of the air, and showing the additional quantity of flour which might be ground *in vacuo*,—each man in the meantime imagining himself a Galileo.

Mrs Sydney has eight distinct illnesses, and I have nine. We take something every hour, and pass the mixture from one to the other.

About forty years ago, I stopped an infant in Lord Breadalbane's grounds, and patted his face. The nurse said, "Hold up your head, Lord Glenorchy." This was the President of your society.* He seems to be acting an honourable and enlightened part in life. Pray present my respects to him and his beautiful Marchioness.

SYDNEY SMITH.

Since writing this I have read your Memoir,—a little too flowery, but very sensible and good.

* Mr Murchison was attending the British Association for the Advancement of Science, that met at Glasgow. The President was the Marquis of Breadalbane.

435.] TO MRS ——.

56 *Green Street, Nov.* 18, 1840.

An earthquake may prevent me, dear Mrs ——, a civil commotion attended with bloodshed, or fatal disease,—but it must be some cause as powerful as these. Pray return the enclosed when you have read it, as I have borrowed it. Yours affectionately,

S. S.

I have heard from Mrs Grote, who is very well, and amusing herself with Horticulture and Democracy,—the most approved methods of growing cabbages and destroying kings.

436.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.

Combe Florey, 1840.

Dear Lady Morley,

Many thanks for a letter which was very agreeable to Mrs Sydney and myself. The former of these personages is much better, and complains principally of increased dimensions, as the old Indians do of our Indian empire.

I am always glad when London time arrives; it always seems in the country as if Joshua were at work, and had stopped the sun. You, dear Lady Morley, have the reverse of Joshua's talent, and accelerate the course of that luminary:—

> By force prophetic Joshua stopp'd the sun,
> But Morley hastens on his course with fun,
> And listeners scarce believe the day is done.

Rumours have reached us of your dramatic fame.

The Bishop of London is behaving very well, and very like a man of sense. Admirable proclamation from Jackson. Read Lady Dacre—very good.

But I am getting garrulous, and will only add that I am, dear Lady Morley, with sincere respect and regard, yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

437.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green Street, Nov. 29, 1840.

My dear Lady Grey,

No war, as you perceive; and Palmerston's star rising in the heavens. People who know that country say it is impossible the Turks can keep Syria. We seem dreadfully entangled in Oriental matters. Trade is very dull and falling off; and the Revenue, as you see, very deficient.

Melbourne gives up all foreign affairs to Palmerston, swearing at it all. Lord Grey would never have suffered any Minister for Foreign Affairs to have sent such a despatch as Palmerston's note

to Guizot; it is universally blamed here. Pray don't go to war with France: that *must* be wrong.

I see Francis has vindicated himself from going to Dissenting chapels, with all the fervour of one who feels he will be a bishop.

The fallen prebendaries, like the devils in the first book of Milton, are shaking themselves, and threatening war against the —— of ——. I am endeavouring to imitate Satan.

You never say a word of yourself, dear Lady Grey. You have that dreadful sin of anti-egotism. When I am ill, I mention it to all my friends and relations, to the lord lieutenant of the county, the justices, the bishop, the churchwardens, the booksellers and editors of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! SYDNEY SMITH.

438.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, Dec. 20, 1840.

I am improved in lumbago, but still less upright than Aristides. Our house is full of beef, beer, young children, newspapers, libels, and mince-pies, and life goes on very well, except that I am often reminded I am too near the end of it. I have been trying ——'s "Lectures on the French Revolution," which I could not get on with, and am reading Thiers, which I find it difficult to lay down. —— is long and feeble; and though you are tolerably sure he will be dull, you are not equally sure he will be right. We are covered with snow, but utterly ignorant of what cold is, as are all natural philosophers.

What a remarkable woman she must be, that Mrs Grote! she uses the word "*thereto*." Why use antiquated forms of expression? Why not wear antiquated caps and shoes? Of all women living, you least want these distinctions.

I join you sincerely in your praise of ——; she is beautiful, she is clear of envy, hatred, and malice, she is very clear of prejudices, she has a regard for me.

It will be a great baronet season,—a year of the Bloody Hand. I know three more baronets I can introduce you to, and four or five knights; but, I take it, the mock-turtle of knights will not go down. I see how it will end; Grote will be made a baronet; and if he is not, I will. The Ministers, who would not make me a bishop, can't refuse to make me a baronet. I remain always your attached friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

439.] TO LORD HATHERTON.

Dover: no date (*about* 1840).

Dear Littleton,

Your invitation has followed me to this place. I wish I could accept it; but about forty years ago I contracted an obligation to

cherish my wife,* and I have been obliged to bring her here; not that I am gulled by the sight of green fields and the sound of singing-birds,—I am too old for that. To my mind there is no verdure in the creation like the green of ——'s face, and Luttrell talks more sweetly than birds can sing. SYDNEY SMITH.

440.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Jan. 3, 1841.

My dear Lady Holland,

I hope you are better than when I left town, and that you have found a house. I have had two months' holiday from gout. Do not imagine I have forgotten my annual tribute of a cheese, but my carriage is in the hands of the doctor, and I have not been able to get to Taunton; for I cannot fall into that absurd English fashion of going in open carriages in the months of December and January, —seasons when I should prefer to go in a bottle, well corked and sealed.

The Hibberts are here, and the house full, light, and warm. Time goes on well. I do all I can to love the country, and endeavour to believe those poetical lies which I read in Rogers and others, on the subject; which said deviations from truth were, by Rogers, all written in St James's Place.

I have long since got rid of all ambition and wish for distinctions, and am much happier for it. The journey is nearly over, and I am careless and good-humoured; at least good-humoured for me, as it is not an attribute which has been largely conceded to me by Providence. Accept my affectionate and sincere good wishes.

SYDNEY SMITH.

441.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Jan. 25, 1841.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

Pray say all that is kind on my part to Miss Poulter, and express how much flattered I am by her present. I have no imagination myself, but am deeply in admiration of those who have; pray beg that we may meet as old friends, and embrace wherever we meet. I shall be in town the 17th of February. The Hibberts have suddenly left us, and we are in a state of collapse. We are all pretty well, my asthma excepted. Ever, dear G., affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

* Mrs Sydney had been seriously ill, and he had been anxious she should try change of air.

442.] TO MRS CROWE.

Combe Florey, Jan. 31, 1841.

Dear Mrs Crowe,

I quite agree with you as to the horrors of correspondence. Correspondences are like small-clothes before the invention of suspenders; it is impossible to keep them up.

That episode of Julia is much too long. Your incidents are remarkable for their improbability. A boy goes on board a frigate in the middle of the night, and penetrates to the captain's cabin without being seen or challenged. Susan climbs into a two-pair-of-stairs window to rescue two grenadiers. A gentleman about to be murdered, is saved by rescuing a woman about to be drowned, and so on. The language is easy, the dialogue natural. There is a great deal of humour; the plot is too complicated. The best part of the book is Mr and Mrs Ayton; but the highest and most important praise of the novel is that you are carried on eagerly, and that it excites and sustains a great interest in the event, and therefore I think it a very good novel, and will recommend it.

It is in vain that I study the subject of the Scotch Church. I have heard it ten times over from Murray, and twenty times from Jeffrey, and I have not the smallest conception what it is about. I know it has something to do with oatmeal, but beyond that I am in utter darkness. Everybody here is turning Puseyite. Having worn out my black gown, I preach in my surplice; this is all the change I have made, or mean to make.

There seems to be in your letter a deep-rooted love of the amusements of the world. Instead of the ever-gay Murray and the never-silent Jeffrey, why do you not cultivate the Scotch clergy and the elders and professors? I should then have some hopes of you.

SYDNEY SMITH.

443.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Feb. 6, 1841.

Many thanks, my dear Lady Grey, for your inquiries. Mrs Sydney is better than she has been for a long time; I have no gout, but am suffering from inflamed eyes proceeding from much reading and writing. Reading and writing, God knows, to very little use, but resorted to in the country from not knowing what else to do.

I read Guizot's "Washington" in the summer. Nothing can be better, more succinct, more judicious, more true, more just; but I have done with reviewing. I will write when I have collected some news for you in London. I have read "Susan Hopley." The incidents are improbable, but the book took me on, and I kept reading it.

SYDNEY SMITH.

444.] TO R. MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Feb. 7, 1841.

Dear Milnes,

Pray tell me if you remember my commission of *papier chimique;* I am afraid you only thought of *papier politique.* You are generally supposed to be the author of all the late measures of the French Cabinet.

I purpose to be in town on the 17th, but the elements seem to purpose that I shall not. I often exclaim to the descending snow, "Pourquoi tant de fracas pour le voyage d'un chanoine à Londres?"

Answer this letter, dear Milnes, by return of post, or you shall have a poor time of it when I arrive. SYDNEY SMITH.

445.] TO R. MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Feb. 14, 1841.

My dear Sir,

I am very much obliged by your kindness in procuring for me the *papier chimique.* Pray let me know what I am in your debt: it is best to be scrupulous and punctilious in trifles. I should be very unhappy about Macleod and America, if I had not impressed upon myself, in the course of a long life, that there is always some misery of this kind hanging over us, and that being unhappy does no good. I console myself with Doddridge's Exposition and "The Scholar Armed," to say nothing of a very popular book, "The Dissenter Tripped up." I remain, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

SYDNEY SMITH.

446.] TO R. MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ.

Munden House, Friday, 11th, 1841.

Dear Milnes,

I will not receive you on these terms, but postpone you for safer times. I cannot blame you; but, seriously, dinners are destroyed by the inconveniences of a free Government. I have filled up your place, and bought your book. SYDNEY SMITH.

447.] TO MRS ——.

Green Street, Grosvenor Square, March 5, 1841.

My dear Mrs ——,

At the sight of ——, away fly gaiety, ease, carelessness, happiness. Effusions are checked, faces are puckered up; coldness, formality, and reserve are diffused over the room, and the social temperature falls down to zero. I *could* not stand it. I know you will forgive me, but my constitution is shattered, and I have not nerves for such an occurrence. S. S.

448.] TO MRS ——.

March 6, 1841.

My dear Mrs ——,

Did you never hear of persons who have an aversion to cheese? to cats? to roast hare? Can you reason them out of it? Can you write them out of it? Would it be of any use to mention the names of mongers who have lived in the midst of cheese? Would it advance your cause to insist upon the story of Whittington and his Cat!

As for you, dear Mrs ——, I have a sincere regard for you, and that you well know. I am truly sorry you are going. Mrs Sydney and I dine out together, and will both come to you after, if possible, or if impossible. Excuse all this nonsense. Ever, with true affection and friendship, yours, S. S.

449.] TO R. MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ.

Green Street, May 11, 1841.

Dear Milnes,

I am very much obliged by your reserving a place for me, but I have a party of persons who are coming to breakfast with me; all very common persons, I am ashamed to say, who see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and trust to the olfactory nerves to discriminate filth from fragrance. Pray come to us on Thursday, and (O Milnes!) save the country! SYDNEY SMITH.

450.] TO MRS MEYNELL.*

Green Street, May 22, 1841.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

This paper was quite white when it came here; it is the constant effect of our street.

I had a slight attack of fever, which kept me in bed for two nights, and was followed by a slight attack of gout. I am now tolerably well for a person who is never quite well. We spent two or three days at the Archbishop of York's, at Nuneham. There were Lord and Lady Burghersh, Rogers, and Granville Vernon: his daughter is a mass of perfections. I am glad your girl likes me. Give my love to her. I do not despair one day of convincing her of the superiority of the pavement over grass; but she is charming, and as fresh-minded as a sunbeam just touching the earth for the first time.

We are five hours and a half to Bridgewater, and from Bridgewater eleven miles. Till now I have lived for three days on waiters and veal cutlets. God bless you! Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

* Written on green paper.

451.] TO MRS GROTE.

May 30, 1841.

The devil has left me, dear Mrs Grote, and I can walk. I am as proud of the new privilege of walking as Mr Grote would be of a peerage; but I will not abuse it, as I have done before. . . . I have an unpleasant feeling to-day, and upon thinking what it is, I find that you are out of London; therefore the quantity of intelligent matter caring about, and understanding, and loving me, is sensibly diminished. . . . Tell me if you will come to my breakfast on Saturday. SYDNEY SMITH.

452.] TO THE EARL GREY.

No date.

My dear Lord Grey,

I have been to-day to see the cartoons, and I am quite delighted with them. I think Hammick is a tyrant, if he will not let you go. You will be able to see them perfectly well. I had no conception there was so much genius, so much cartoonery, such a power of grouping, and such accuracy of drawing, in the country. I never was more pleased; and I will never look again at an oil painting, except it should be of you, and that will excite in me all the sentiments of regard, respect, and gratitude I feel for the original. Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

453.] TO MRS PROCTER.

June, 1851.

Dear Mrs Procter,

May I drink tea with you the 15th? (it is not Milnes writing, but Sydney Smith), but may I? It will be a great pleasure to me, if not inconvenient to you.

I thank you sincerely for the Poems, which I will not only read, but sing. You have lent me also Cobbett's Advice to Young Men, a book therefore well suited to my time of life.

I hope you have been passing your time agreeably, or rather I should say, disagreeably, as I have not benefited by your proximity; but this London—it is a charming place, but I never do there what I please, or see those I like. At this moment, when I am agreeably occupied in writing to you, there is a loud knock at the door.

I am about to suspend animation in the country for a week, and I beg you to answer my request at Munden House, Watford, Herts. Animate, semi-animate, or in the full flow of metropolitan life, I remain, my dear Madam, truly yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—I write on this paper because it is the colour in which I wish to see every object in human life.*

* The paper is rose-colour.—A. B. P.

454.] TO MISS G. HARCOURT.

Combe Florey, July 24, 1841.

My dear Georgiana,

That innocent Betty may not be blamed, and that I may not be suspected of larceny, I must tell you that I have innocently and unconsciously carried away your silver pencil-case. I would continue to steal it, only it may be a gift from a friend.

I enjoyed my visit at Nuneham very much. It gave me great pleasure to see the best of Archbishops in the best of health and spirits. Your niece Marianne pleased me very much; she has a volume of good qualities. In short, I was pleased with everybody and displeased with nobody, and yet I had the gout all the time, and often painfully; but principally, dear Georgiana, I was pleased with you, because you are always kind and obliging to your old and sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

455.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 24, 1841.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope that Lord Grey and you are continuing in robust health. We are tolerably well here; the gout is never far off, though not actually present; it is the only enemy that I do not wish to have at my feet.

I hear Morpeth is going to America, a resolution I think very wise, and which I should decidedly carry into execution myself, if I were not going to heaven.

We have had divers people at Combe Florey, but none whom you would particularly care about. How many worlds there are in this one world! We are just nine hours from door to door by the railroad. The Gally Knights left Combe Florey after nine o'clock, and were in Grosvenor Street before six. I call this a very serious increase of comfort. I used to sleep two nights on the road; and to travel with a pair of horses is miserable work. I dare say the railroad has added ten per cent. to the value of property in this neighbourhood.

We are in great alarm here for the harvest. It is all down, and growing as it stands. It is Whig weather, and favourable to John Russell's speeches on the Corn Laws. Remember me very kindly to Lord Grey and Georgiana, and believe me your steady and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

456.] TO LADY DAVY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 31, 1841.

My dear Lady Davy,

I thank you for your very kind letter, which gave to Mrs Sydney

and to myself much pleasure, and carried us back agreeably into past times. We are both tolerably well, bulging out like old houses, but with no immediate intention of tumbling down. The country is in a state of political transition, and the shabby are preparing their consciences and opinions for a tack.

I think all our common friends are doing well. Some are fatter, some more spare, none handsomer; but, such as they are, I think you will see them all again. But pray do you ever mean to see *any* of us again? or do you mean to end your days at Rome? a town, I hear, you have entirely enslaved, and where, in spite of your Protestantism, you are omnipotent. Your Protestantism (but I confess that reflection makes me melancholy)—your attachment to the clergy generally—the activity of your mind—the Roman Catholic spirit of proselytism—all alarm me. I am assured they will get hold of you, and we shall lose you from the Church of England. Only promise me that you will not give up till you have subjected their arguments to my examination, and given me a chance of reply: tell them that there is *un Canonico dottissimo* to whom you have pledged your theological faith. Excuse my zeal; it is an additional proof of my affection. Believe me, dear Lady Davy, your affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

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457. TO MISS G. HARCOURT.

Combe Florey, September, 1841.

My dear Georgiana,

There is something awful and mysterious in the curled cress-seed you sent me. Some of it will not come up at all; other seeds put on the form of all sorts of plants, and will in time be oaks and elm-trees. We wait the result in patience, and you shall hear it.

There is an end of all earthly Whiggism, and that unfortunate class of men are getting into holes and corners as fast as possible. Some are taking orders, some are going to the Continent, some to America, some going over to Peel, some to Jerusalem. I think —— very likely to marry a Circassian, a large convex lady, filling up great space morally and physically. He is an ambitious man, though he looks as if his brethren had just sold him to the Ishmaelite merchants.

Mr —— seems to be the most important man north of the Humber. How can it be otherwise, dear Georgiana, with such felicities in the pulpit as "the brilliant reptile's polished fang?" Massillon has nothing equal to this.

We have had a great deal of company. Of all the saints, I hate La Trappe the most: I believe he has been canonised. I wrote to W——, at Plymouth, conceiving him to be among the philosophers,

of course, and not believing that an acid and an alkali would combine without him. Having received no answer from him, I imagined he had either quitted the world or the Established Church: or that he was composing a pamphlet against Dr Simon Magus the ——. My kind regards to him.

I am delighted to hear of the health and activity of the Archbishop. Present to him, if you please, my homage. Your affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

458.] TO MRS GROTE.

Sidmouth, Sept. 14, 1841.

Dear Mrs Grote,

We are come here for a few days; it is very lovely, and very stupid. Your excursion to Brittany will be very pleasant, but not for the reasons you give. I have no idolatry for Madame de Sévigné; she had merely a fine epistolary style. There is not a page of Madame de Staël where there is not more thought, and very often, thoughts as just as they are new.

I am drawing up a short account of the late Francis Horner, which Leonard Horner is to insert in a Memoir he is about to publish of his brother: I read it to Mrs Sydney, who was much pleased with it, and I think you will not dislike it. I wish you had known Horner.

There is a report that the curates are about to strike, that they have mobbed several rectors, and that a body of bishops' chaplains are coming down by the railroad to disperse them. Thank God, the heats are passed away; I was completely exhausted, gave up locomotion, and poured cold water on my head.

You do not say, but I presume you leave England the beginning of October. I will endeavour to look as much like the Apollo Belvidere as a corpulent Canon can do, when you return. Your sincere friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

459.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 8, 1841.

My dear Lady Grey,

I do not believe that Peel had anything to do, as some of the Whigs believe, with the shooting at Lord Howick; however, I am very glad he survives, and is returned to Parliament, where, from his abilities and station, he has such an undoubted right to be. I am glad to find you are all so well. I am not ill, but should be much better if I lived in a colder climate. Lady Georgiana is one of the best persons in the world, and is always sure to do what is right.

I see Mr —— has been fighting the Puseyites. I am sorry for

it, because, as his sincere friend, I wish he would neither speak nor write. He is a thoroughly amiable, foolish, learned man, and had better bring himself as little into notice as possible.

Pray read the first volume of Elphinstone's "India." The news from China gives me the greatest pleasure. I am for bombarding all the exclusive Asiatics, who shut up the earth, and will not let me walk civilly and quietly through it, doing no harm, and paying for all I want. We are in for a dozen years of Tory power at least, and the country will fast lapse into monarchical and ecclesiastical habits. In all revolutions of politics, I shall always remain, dear Lady Grey, sincerely and affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

460.] TO MRS ——.

Green Street, Oct. 29, 1841.

My dear Mrs ——,

It grieves me to think you will not be in England this winter. The privations of winter are numerous enough without this. The absence of leaves and flowers I could endure, and am accustomed to; but the absence of amiable and enlightened women I have not hitherto connected with the approach of winter, and I do not at all approve of it.

Great forgeries of Exchequer Bills in England, and all the world up in arms; the evil to the amount of £200,000 or £300,000. Sanguine people imagine Lord Monteagle will be hanged. I am a holder of Exchequer Bills to some little amount, and am quaking for fear. Poor Jeffrey is at Empson's, very ill, and writing in a melancholy mood of himself. He seems very reluctant to resign his seat on the Bench, and no wonder, where he gains every day great reputation, and is of great use;—still he may gain a few years of life if he will be quiet, and fall into a private station.

Mrs Grote is, I presume, abroad, collecting at Rome, for Roebuck and others, anecdotes of Catiline and the Gracchi. She came to Combe Florey again this year, which was very kind and flattering. I have a high opinion of, and a real affection for her; she has an excellent head, and an honest and kind heart.

The Tories are going on quite quietly, and are in for a dozen years. I am living in London this winter quite alone;—pity me, and keep for me a little portion of remembrance and regard. Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

461.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Munden House, Watford, 1841.

My dear Murray,

I am extremely obliged by your kind attention in writing to me

respecting the illness of our friend Jeffrey; I had seen it in the papers of to-day for the first time, just as your letter arrived, and was about to write. Whoever, at his period of life, means to go on, and to be well, must institute the most rigid and Spartan-like discipline as to food. These are the conditions of nature, as plain as if they had been drawn up on parchment by a Writer to the Signet upon the proper stamp.

The most sanguine of the Whigs think the next Parliament will be much the same as this; that parties will be as equally balanced. This is the opinion of Charles Wood and Lord Duncannon. The most sanguine of the Tories think they shall gain fifty votes. I have no opinion on the subject.

It will give me great pleasure, my dear Murray, to see you in London next spring; you have such an extensive acquaintance there, that you should keep it up.

I am staying here with the Hibberts. Nothing can exceed the comfort of the place. Happy the father who sees his daughter so well placed! I am very glad the Archbishop of Dublin has given something to Shannon, whom I know, from your statements and from my own observation, to be a very excellent person. I will certainly read his book. Yours, dear Murray, most sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

462.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, December, 1841.

It shall be done, dearest G., as soon as I can get some silver paper adapted for foreign postages. I believe Lady Davy to be the most kind and useful person whose acquaintance can be made at Rome.

You may laugh, dear G., but after all, the country is most dreadful! The real use of it is to find food for cities; but as for a residence of any man who is neither butcher nor baker, nor food-grower in any of its branches, it is a dreadful waste of existence and abuse of life. God bless you! SYDNEY SMITH.

I called on Miss —— last time I was in London. The answer at the door was, "She was gone from thence, but was to be heard of at the Temple."

463.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Dec. 1841.

My dear Georgiana,

It is indeed a great loss * to me; but I have learnt to live as a soldier does in war, expecting that, on any one moment, the best and the dearest may be killed before his eyes.

* The death of Lord Holland.

Promise me, in the midst of these afflicting deaths, that you will remain alive; and if Death does tap at the door, say, "I can't come; I have promised a parson to see him out."

These verses were found in Lord Holland's room in his handwriting:—

> "Nephew of Fox, and friend of Grey,—
> Enough my meed of fame,
> If those who deign'd to observe me say
> I tarnish'd neither name."

I have gout, asthma, and seven other maladies, but am otherwise very well. God bless you, Gem of Needwood Forest!

SYDNEY SMITH.

464.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

Dogmersfield Park, 1841.

You have very naturally, my dear Lady Ashburton, referred to me for some information respecting St Anthony. The principal anecdotes related of him are, that he was rather careless of his diet; and that, instead of confining himself to boiled mutton and a little wine and water, he ate of side-dishes, and drank two glasses of sherry, and refused to lead a life of great care and circumspection, such as his constitution required. The consequence was, that his friends were often alarmed at his health; and the medical men of Jerusalem and Jericho were in constant requisition, taking exorbitant fees, and doing him little good.

You ought to be very thankful to me (Lord Ashburton and yourself) for resisting as firmly and honourably as I do, my desire to offer myself at the Grange; but my health is so indifferent, and my spirits so low, and I am so old and half-dead, that I am mere lumber; so that I can only inflict myself upon the Mildmays, who are accustomed to Mr ——; and I dare not appear before one who crosses the seas to arrange the destinies of nations, and to chain up in bonds of peace the angry passions of the people of the earth.

Still I can preach a little; and I wish you had witnessed, the other day, at St Paul's, my incredible boldness in attacking the Puseyites. I told them that they made the Christian religion a religion of postures and ceremonies, of circumflexions and genuflexions, of garments and vestures, of ostentation and parade; that they took up tithe of mint and cummin, and neglected the weightier matters of the law,—justice, mercy, and the duties of life; and so forth.

Pray give my kind regards to the ambassador of ambassadors; and believe me, my dear Lady Ashburton, with benedictions to the whole house, ever sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

465.] TO R. MURCHISON, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Dec. 26, 1841.

Dear Murchison,

Many thanks for your yellow book,* which has just come down to me. You have gained great fame, and I am very glad of it. Had it been in theology, I should have been your rival, and probably have been jealous of you; but as it is in geology, my benevolence and real goodwill towards you have fair play. I shall read you out aloud to-day; Heaven send I may understand you! Not that I suspect your perspicuity, but that my knowledge of your science is too slender for that advantage: a knowledge which just enables me to distinguish between the caseous and the cretaceous formations; or, as the vulgar have it, to "know chalk from cheese."

There are no people here, and no events, so I have no news to tell you, except that in this mild climate my orange-trees are now out of doors, and in full bearing. Immediately before my window there are twelve large oranges on one tree. The trees themselves are not the Linnæan orange-tree, but what are popularly called the bay-tree, in large green boxes of the most correct shape, and the oranges well secured to them with the best packthread. They are universally admired, and, upon the whole, considered to be finer than the Ludovican orange-trees of Versailles. Yours, my dear Murchison,

SYDNEY SMITH.

466.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Jan. 10, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

Tell me if you think this sketch is like,† and what important feature I have left out or misrepresented. Remember, it is not an *éloge*, but an analysis.

I heard, when I was in London, that my old correspondent, Archdeacon Singleton, would be the first Tory Bishop. He is a great friend of Peel's; they could not select a better man.

I pass my life in reading. The moment my eyes fail, I must give up my country preferment. I have met with nothing new or very well worth meeting, except the curious discoveries of ancient American cities in Mexico, by Stephens; which, I presume, has been read at Howick. I am very glad Lord Howick is in Parliament: his honesty, ability, and rank make it desirable for the country he should be there.

I hope Lord Grey has read, and likes, Macaulay's review of

* The yellow book was an inaugural address to the Dudley and Midland Geological Society.

† Enclosed in the above letter was the portrait of Lord Holland, to be found in the Memoir, Chapter X.

Warren Hastings. It is very much admired. I believe he is unaffectedly glad to have given up office. Literature is his vocation.

I shall be very curious to know the impression America produces on Lord Morpeth. He is acute, and his opinions always very just. It is a fortunate thing for the world, that the separate American States are making such progress in dishonesty, and are absolutely and plainly refusing to pay their debts. They would soon have been too formidable, if they had added the moral power of good faith to their physical strength.

I beg my kind regards to Lord Grey and Lady Georgiana; and remain always, dear Lady Grey, with sincere respect and affection, your friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

467.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Feb. 6, 1842.

My dear Philips,

I have suffered a great deal this winter from dulness and *ennui*. I am not one of those mortals that have "infinite resources in themselves," but am fitted up with the commonest materials, and require to be amused. However, I shall soon be in London, where I will take my revenge. Hibbert not being here, I have had no one to argue with. The neighbouring clergy never attempt it, or they are checkmated the second or third move. Such sort of rumours as you allude to are disagreeable, especially to young people, who imagine mankind have left off hunting, shooting, and ploughing, to speculate upon them.

Are you not struck with the diplomatic gallantry of Lord Ashburton? He resembles Regulus. I tell him that the real cause of the hostility of America is, that we are more elegant, and speak better English than they do.

The opening of the session was very milk-and-watery. The secession of the —— is a great accession of strength to Peel. —— is, besides his violence, a weak, foolish man. I have met him two or three times at Mr ——'s, and have no doubt that he is anserous and asinine.

I want very much to write something, but cannot bring myself to do it,—principally from the great number of topics which offer themselves, all of which would be equally agreeable to me. I am very glad you have thrown away your last fit of gout. Considering your dreadful indulgences in the second course, I think they have let you off very easily. Mrs Sydney has certainly taken a new lease. She is become less, can walk, and has much more enjoyment of life. I am very well, asthma expected. God bless you, dear Philips! I remain, your old and sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

468.] TO LORD FRANCIS EGERTON.

56 Green Street, Feb. 18, 1842.

Dear Lord Francis,

Many thanks for your kindness in sending me the Pilgrimage, which I have read with real pleasure; it is all good, but what I like best is the 53d, and that train of thought followed out in the subsequent stanzas. The toil and heat of the journey supported by the animation of the religious scenery: this is truly poetical. I thought also the end very beautiful.

I have sent to the press the pamphlet on the Marriage Act, as you desired. Ever very truly yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

469.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green Street, March 16, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

A most melancholy occurrence,—the death of poor Singleton! So unexpected, and so premature! He was an excellent specimen of an English clergyman, and I most heartily and sincerely regret his loss. We shall be very glad to see you here. This is the spot, I am convinced, where all the evils of life are soonest forgotten and most easily endured.

I have no news to tell you. We are all talking here of India and Income; the one circumscribed by the Affghans, and the other by Peel. The Duke of Norfolk is dead.

John Grey seems to be a very sensible, pleasing young man. His refusal of the living of Sunbury convinces me that he is not fond of gudgeon-fishing. I had figured to myself you and Lord Grey and myself engaged in that occupation upon the river Thames. S. S.

470.] TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

May 14, 1842.

My dear Dickens,

I accept your obliging invitation conditionally. If I am invited by any man of greater genius than yourself, or one by whose works I have been more completely interested, I will repudiate you, and dine with the more splendid phenomenon of the two. Ever yours sincerely, SYDNEY SMITH.

471.] TO MISS G. HARCOURT.

Green Street, July 7, 1842.

Dear Georgiana,

What a pretty name is Georgiana! Many people would say,

* Now the Earl of Ellesmere.

what a pretty name Georgiana is! but this would be inelegant; and it is more tolerable to be slovenly in dress than in style. Dress covers the mortal body, and adorns it, but style is the vehicle of the spirit.

Now, touching our stay with you, dear young lady, you said, "Stay longer: one day is not enough;" and I myself think such a sojourning hasty and fugacious. It all comes from my modesty; but Mrs Sydney tells me I am endurable for two days, so we will stay with you till Friday morning after breakfast, you and my Lord being willing, which I shall suppose you are, unless I hear to the contrary.

I have many other things to say to you, but I postpone them till we meet. It is time to put an end to my paper volubility, and you know how I always end my letters by telling you (and the problems of Euclid are not more true) that I am your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

472.] TO MISS G. HARCOURT.

Combe Florey, July 16, 1842.

My dear Georgiana,

We had a very unpleasant journey home, from the tossing and heaving of our own carriage, in which we remained, instead of going into one of the great carriage-cottages. The next time we shall try the other plan.

Many thanks for your kindness and hospitality. I was a little damaged by that handsome sister of Mrs ——: such a fine figure, and such a beautiful and commanding countenance. I talked sensibly for ten minutes, without a single piece of foolishness,—just as a rational creature would have done. I liked Miss ——, but she was eclipsed by the new beauty, whom, if I were young and free, I think I should pursue even to the tabernacle, out-rank her preachers, and become her favourite pulpit-fool.

Combe Florey looked beautiful, and our parsonage the perfection of comfort. I have now put off my chrysalis wings, and assume the grub state. You remain, dear Georgiana, a chrysalis all the year round,—for there is very little difference between Bishopthorpe and Piccadilly, and none between Nuneham and Grosvenor Square.

I have put off all the catalogue of domestic evils till Monday;—sick cows, lame horses, frail females, mischievous boys, and small felonies! Your sincere and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

473.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Aug. 16, 1842.

My dear Philips,

I am extremely glad to hear that Lady Philips and you are so well. Mrs Sydney and I are resolved to follow your example, and have been imitating you in this particular for some time. The only point in which our practice differs is, that Mrs Sydney and I get larger and larger, as we get older; you and Lady Philips become less and less. You will die of smallness,—we shall perish from diameter. There has certainly been some serious mistake about this summer. It was intended for the tropics; and some hot country is cursed with our cold rainy summer, losing all its cloves and nutmegs, scarcely able to ripen a pine-apple out of doors, or to squeeze a hogshead of sugar from the cane.

I agree in all you say about the Income Tax. Never was there such an obscure piece of penmanship! It must have been drawn up by some one as ignorant of law language at Dr —— is of medicine. What dreadful blunders that poor Medico will make! Dreadful will be the confusion between the schedules; worse than the confusion of phials by that nasty little boy, Robert Rhubarb, in his shop, whom he has taken as his apprentice, at a pound a year and his breeches.

I am a good deal alarmed at the slow return of prosperity to the manufacturers, but still do not give up my opinion of amelioration. I should like very much to see a dispassionate examination of the present state of trade and manufactures. But who is dispassionate on such a subject? The writer has either lost or gained, or is a violent Whig or a violent Tory.

There seems to be some appearance as if Lord Ashburton had effected his object. He writes home that he may be expected any day, and that they are to write no more; and the papers say that the heads of the treaty are agreed upon. If he have completed his object, it is one of the cleverest and most brilliant things done in my time, and he has honestly won his earldom. I never had much belief in his success, because I did not imagine that the Americans ever really intended to give up a cause of quarrel, which might hereafter be so subservient to their ambition and extension. God bless you, my dear old friend! SYDNEY SMITH.

474.] TO LADY WENLOCK.

Combe Florey, 1842.

My dear Lady Wenlock,

I am heartily sorry for the necessity which takes you to Italy. You have many friends, who will be truly anxious for your welfare

and happiness; pray place us on that list. The constant kindness and attention I have received from Lord Wenlock and yourself have bound me over to you, and made me sincerely your friend, and your highly obliged friend. I will write you a line now and then, if you will permit me, to tell you how the world literary and ecclesiastical is going on.

Many thanks for the charge, which I will certainly read. If I am as much pleased with it as you are, I am sure my pleasure will be mingled with no small share of surprise; for though I think the Bishop of —— a very amiable man, I did not think I should ever read with approbation, or indeed read at all, ten pages of his writing.

I beg to be kindly remembered to Miss Lawley, whom Mrs Sydney and I have fairly fallen in love with; so affable, so natural, so handsome,—you will never keep her long, for I should think it a perfect infamy in any young man of rank and fortune to be three days in her company without making her an offer.

My kindest wishes and earnest benediction for you and yours, dear Lady Wenlock, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—The charge is admirable; I have written to the Bishop about it.

475.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 26, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you have survived the heat; I have done so, but with some difficulty. After the heat came the riots. The only difference between these and the former manufacturing riots is, that the mob have got hold, under the name of Chartism, of some plan for political innovation; but that plan is so foolish, that I do not think it will be long-lived.

If any one bearing the name of Grey comes this way, send him to us: I am *Grey-men-ivorous*. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! I will not scold you any more: silent or scribbling, you shall have your own way, provided you will believe me to remain your affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

476.] TO LADY DAVY.

September 11, 1842.

My dear Lady Davy,

There is a demand for you in England, and a general inquiry whether you have given us up altogether. I always defend you, and say, if you have so done, that it is from no want of love for us, but from a rooted dislike of rheumatism, catarrh, and bodily

mal-être, such as all true Britons undergo for eleven months and three weeks in the year.

What have I to tell you of our old friends? Lady —— is tolerably well, with two courses and a French cook. She has fitted up her lower rooms in a very pretty style, and there receives the shattered remains of the symposiasts of the house. Lady —— has captivated Mr ——, though they have not proceeded to the extremities of marriage. Mr —— is going gently down-hill, trusting that the cookery in another planet may be at least as good as in this; but not without apprehensions that for misconduct here he may be sentenced to a thousand years of tough mutton, or condemned to a little eternity of family dinners.

I have not yet discovered of what I am to die, but I rather believe I shall be burnt alive by the Puseyites. Nothing so remarkable in England as the progress of these foolish people. I have no conception what they mean, if it be not to revive every absurd ceremony, and every antiquated folly, which the common sense of mankind has set to sleep. You will find at your return a fanatical Church of England, but pray do not let it prevent your return. We can always gather together, in Park Street and Green Street, a chosen few who have never bowed the knee to Rimmon.

Did you meet at Rome my friend Mrs ——? Give me, if you please, some notion of the impression she produced upon you. She is very clever, very good-natured, and good-hearted, but the Lilliputians are afraid of her. We shall be truly glad to see you again, but I think you will never return. Why should you give up your serene heavens and short winters, to re-enter this garret of the earth? Yet there are those in the garret who know how to appreciate you, and no one better than your old and sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

477.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

No date.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

I have just sent a long letter to the brother of Francis Horner, which he is to publish in his Memoir of my old friend. I had great pleasure in writing it. You and Lord Carlisle will, I am sure, justify all the good I have said of him.

Even Archbishops of Canterbury must die. Archbishops of York seem to be the only persons exempt. I wonder who will succeed. It is of great importance that Archbishops should be tall. They ought not to take them under six feet, without their shoes or wigs. Lord Liverpool meant to elevate Kaye, the Bishop of Lincoln, if the see of Canterbury had become vacant in his time; but the Church would not last twenty years with such a little man.

I hope you are well and happy, dear Lady Carlisle, and that every Victoria's head that reaches Castle Howard brings you pleasing intelligence of sons, daughters, and grandchildren.

SYDNEY SMITH.

478.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Combe Florey, Sept. 12, 1842.

My dear Murray,

How did the Queen receive you? What was the general effect of her visit? Was it well managed? Does she show any turn for metaphysics? Have you had much company in the Highlands?

Mrs Sydney and I are both in fair health,—such health as is conceded to moribundity and caducity.

Horner applied to me, and I sent him a long letter upon the subject of his brother, which he likes, and means to publish in his Memoirs. He seeks the same contribution from Jeffrey. Pray say to Jeffrey that he ought to send it. It is a great pity that the subject has been so long deferred. The mischief has all proceeded from the delays of poor Whishaw, who cared too much about reputation, to do anything in a period compatible with the shortness of human life. If you have seen Jeffrey, tell me how he is, and if you think he will stand his work.

We have the railroad now within five miles. Bath in two hours, London in six,—in short, everywhere in no time! Every fresh accident on the railroads is an advantage, and leads to an improvement. What we want is, an overturn which would kill a bishop, or, at least, a dean. This mode of conveyance would then become perfect. We have had but little company here this summer. Luttrell comes next week. I have given notice to the fishmongers, and poulterers, and fruit women! Ever, dear Murray, your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

479.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Sept. 13, 1842.

My dear Philips,

I have no belief at all in the general decay of English manufactures; and I believe before Christmas the infernal regions of Manchester will be in an uproar of manufacturing activity. I have made my return of income, but I have done it by the light of nature, unassisted by the Act. They should not put such men as Dr W—— to interpret difficult Acts. Your friend Rolfe is always liked by the Bar. He gives universal satisfaction.

I hear that Lady Philips is a good deal alarmed at the idea of Vigne, the traveller in Caboul, being a Mahometan. I have no belief that he is so; but you had better inquire of Dr Wright about it, and that will put the clergyman of the parish at his ease.

It seems quite useless to kill the Chinese. It is like killing flies in July; a practice which tires the cruelest schoolboy. I really do not know what is to be done, unless to send Napier, who, for a sum of money, would dethrone the Emperor, and bring him here. You should read Napier's two little volumes of the war in Portugal. He is an heroic fellow, equal to anything in Plutarch; and, moreover, a long-headed, clever hero, who takes good aim before he fires. I had a letter yesterday from Howick. They are all expecting in Northumberland that the Queen will return by land.

I hope you have given up riding, and yielded to the alarms of your friends. Indeed, my dear old friend, it is perilous to see you on horseback. If you had ever the elements of that art, there might be some hope, but you know I never could succeed in teaching you, either by example or precept. Ever, my dear Philips, most sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

480.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Sept. 13, 1842.

My dear Lady Holland,

I am sorry to hear Allen is not well; but the reduction of his legs is a pure and unmixed good; they are enormous,—they are clerical! He has the creed of a philosopher and the legs of a clergyman; I never saw such legs,—at least, belonging to a layman.

Read "A Life in the Forest," skipping nimbly; but there is much of good in it.

It is a bore, I admit, to be past seventy, for you are left for execution, and are daily expecting the death-warrant; but, as you say, it is not anything very capital we quit. We are, at the close of life, only hurried away from stomach-aches, pains in the joints, from sleepless nights and unamusing days, from weakness, ugliness, and nervous tremors; but we shall all meet again in another planet, cured of all our defects. —— will be less irritable; —— more silent; —— will assent; Jeffrey will speak slower; Bobus will be just as he is; I shall be more respectful to the upper clergy; but I shall have as lively a sense as I now have of all your kindness and affection for me. SYDNEY SMITH.

481.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, Sept. 13, 1842.

Dearest Gee,

Nothing could exceed the beauty of the grapes, except the beauty of the pine-aple. How well you understand the clergy!

I am living, lively and young as I am, in the most profound solitude. I saw a crow yesterday, and had a distant view of a

rabbit to-day. I have ceased to trouble myself about company. If anybody thinks it worth while to turn aside to the Valley of Flowers, I am most happy to see them; but I have ceased to lay plots, and to toil for visitors. I save myself by this much disappointment.

SYDNEY SMITH.

482.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 19, 1842.

My dear Lady Grey,

Thank God, this fine summer, which you so admire, is over! I have suffered dreadfully from it. I was only half-alive, and could with difficulty keep all my limbs together, and make them perform their proper functions.

You wrote me a very kind letter: I am very much obliged to you for it. I am very proud of the friendship of yourself and Lord Grey, and value myself more, because you set some value upon me. Luttrell is staying here; he is remarkably well, considering that he has been remarkably well for so many years. You never seem tired of Howick, or if you are, you do not confess it. I am more unfortunate or more honest. I tire of Combe Florey after two months, and sigh for a change, even for the worse. This disposition in me is hereditary; my father lived, within my recollection, in nineteen different places.

Lord Ashburton seems to have done very well. The treaty can hardly be a bad one; any concession was better than war. He owes his success, not more to his own dexterity, than to the present poverty and distress of America. They are in a state of humiliation. The State of Pennsylvania cheats me this year out of £50. There is nothing in the crimes of kings worse than this villany of democracy. The mob positively refuse all taxation for the payment of State debts.

I have heard from several London people the details of ——— ———. It is among the most remarkable events of my time, and very frightful. I never longed to steal anything but some manuscript sermons from my brother clergymen, and I have hitherto withstood the temptation.

SYDNEY SMITH.

483.] TO LORD DENMAN.

Combe Florey, October, 1842.

My dear Lord,

I have received your speech upon affirmations; and though it is not said so on the white leaf, I believe you sent it to me: if not, leave me in the honourable delusion.

Your great difficulty in arguing such a question is akin to that of proving that two and two are equivalent to four. All that the

Legislature ought to inquire is, whether this scruple is now become so common as to cause the frequent interruption of justice. This admitted, the remedy ought to follow as a matter of course. We are to get the best evidence for establishing truth,—not the best evidence *we can imagine*, but the best evidence *we can procure;* and if you cannot get oath, you must put up with affirmation, as far better than no evidence at all. But one is ashamed to descant upon such obvious truths.

One obvious truth, however, I have always great pleasure in descanting upon; and that is, that I always see the Chief Justice leading the way in everything that is brave, liberal, and wise; and I beg he will accept my best wishes and kind regards.

SYDNEY SMITH.

484.] TO MRS ——.

Combe Florey, Oct. 13, 1842.

My dear Mrs ——,

You lie heavy upon my conscience, unaccustomed to bear any weight at all. What can a country parson say to a travelled and travelling lady, who neither knows nor cares anything for wheat, oats, and barley? It is this reflection which keeps me silent. Still she has a fine heart, and likes to be cared for, even by me.

Mrs Sydney and I are in tolerable health,—both better than we were when you lived in England; but there is much more of us, so that you will find you were only half acquainted with us! I wish I could add that the intellectual faculties had expanded in proportion to the augmentation of flesh and blood.

Have you any chance of coming home? or rather, I should say, have we any chance of seeing you at home? I have been living for three months quite alone here. I am nearly seventy-two, and I confess myself afraid of the very disagreeable methods by which we leave this world; the long death of palsy, or the degraded spectacle of aged idiotism. As for the *pleasures* of the world,—it is a very ordinary, middling sort of place. Pray be my tombstone, and say a good word for me when I am dead! I shall think of my beautiful monument when I am going; but I wish I could see it before I die. God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

485.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green Street, November, 1842.

There are plenty of people in London, dear Lady Grey, as there always are. I am leading a life almost as riotous as in the middle of June. Have you read Macaulay's "Lays"? They are very much liked. I have read some of them, but I abhor all Grecian and Roman subjects.

There are no Whigs to be seen. There are descriptions of them; but they are a lost variety of the species, like the dodo or sea-cow.

I am just recovered from a fit of the gout, but am quite well,—enjoying life, and ready for death!

Kind regards to my Lord, and to Georgiana, the honest and the true; and much affection from your old friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

486.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

November 6, 1842.

My dear Lady Holland,

I have not the heart, when an amiable lady says, "Come to 'Semiramis' in my box," to decline; but I got bolder at a distance. "Semiramis" would be to me pure misery. I love music very little,—I hate acting; I have the worst opinion of Semiramis herself, and the whole thing (I cannot help it) seems so childish and so foolish that I cannot abide it. Moreover, it would be ratner out of etiquette for a Canon of St Paul's to go to an opera; and where etiquette prevents me from doing things disagreeable to myself, I am a perfect martinet.

All these things considered, I am sure you will not be a Semiramis to me, but let me off. SYDNEY SMITH.

487.] TO MISS BERRY.

November, 1842.

Where is Tittenhanger?
Is it near Bangor?
Is it in Scotland,
Or a more flat land?
Is it in Wales,
Or near Versailles?
Tell me, in the name of grace,
Why you go to such a place?
I do not know in what map to look,
And I can't find it in the Road-book.
I always feel so sad and undone,
When you and Agnes go from London.
Your loving friend and plump divine
Accepts your kind commands to dine.
I will be certain to remember
The fifteenth day of this November.
There is a young Prince
Two days since——
But for fear I should be a bore,
I won't write you any more;
Indeed I've nothing else to tell,
But that Monckton Milnes is well.

SYDNEY SMITH.

488.] TO LADY BELL.

56 Green Street, Grosvenor Square, Nov. 26, 1842.

My dear Lady Bell,

What has a clergyman to offer but sermons?

Look over this,* and if you like it, copy it, and return it here before the 6th of December. They are common arguments, but I know no other;—and attribute what I send not to vanity, but kindness,—for your state affected me very much. I will call upon you very soon. Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

489.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, December, 1842.

My dear Saba,

Your three eldest children will each receive a copy † from me. I had intended to send them before your letter came; therefore submit with a good grace, and do not oppose your papa. Ever your affectionate father, SYDNEY SMITH.

490.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

December 21, 1842.

Dear Lady Grey,

I am quite delighted with the railroad. I came down in the public carriages without any fatigue, and I could have gone to the poles or the equator without stopping. Distance is abolished,—scratch that out of the catalogue of human evils.

Luckily, serious quarrels have broken out here, and everybody is challenging everybody. This is something to talk about. I study the question deeply, whether the Clerk of the Peace is to fight a certain captain whose name is *Mars*. These quarrels produce a wholesome agitation of the air, and disturb the serious apoplexy of a country life.

I have just read young Philips's review of Alison, and think it very good. It is well expressed, and the censure is conveyed in a much more gentle manner than characterises the Edinburgh Review, or than did characterise it, when I had anything to do with it. I am not sure that it is not every now and then languid and feeble, and certainly it has the universal fault of being a great deal too long. What is required in a review? As much knowledge and information upon any one subject as can be condensed into eight or ten pages. You must not bring me a loaf when I ask for a crust, or a joint of meat when I petition for a sandwich.

* This Sermon was published after Mr Sydney Smith's death. "We are perplexed, but not in despair," &c.

† Of the writer's Works.

The weather is here, as it seems to be everywhere, perfectly delightful. Even in Scotland they pretend it is fine; but they are not to be believed on their oath, where the climate of Scotland is concerned.

Did you ever read "Le Père Goriot," by Balzac, or "La Messe de l'Athée"? They are very good, and perfectly readable for ladies and gentlemen. Your affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

491.] TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

January 6, 1843.

My dear Sir,

You have been so used to these sort of impertinences, that I believe you will excuse me for saying how very much I am pleased with the first number of your new work. Pecksniff and his daughters, and Pinch, are admirable,—quite first-rate painting, such as no one but yourself can execute.

I did not like your genealogy of the Chuzzlewits, and I must wait a little to see how Martin turns out; I am impatient for the next number.

Pray come and see me next summer; and believe me ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—Chuffey is admirable. I never read a finer piece of writing; it is deeply pathetic and affecting. Your last number is excellent. Don't give yourself the trouble to answer my impertinent eulogies, only excuse them. Ever yours, S. S.

492.] TO LADY HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, Jan. 16, 1843.

My dear Lady Holland,

I exempt you from a regular and punctual system of answers to my nonsense. I find it almost impossible to read your handwriting; but knowing it always contains some proffer of kindness and hospitality to me, I answer upon general principles and conjecture.

Have you any objection to take a few lessons of writing from me in my morning calls? I could bring you on very much in the course of next summer; and if you take pains, I will show your book to Lady Cowper. I behaved very generously to Bobus in letting him off from coming here; he promises to come next summer, but such is my good-nature, that I think he will try to escape. Bowood is, I believe, his only exception to the love of solitude.

We are in a snow-storm; but with a warm house and noisy

grandchildren, I defy the weather. I wish for nothing out of the house but the continuance of your kindness and affection.

SYDNEY SMITH.

493.] TO MISS BERRY.

Combe Florey, Jan. 28, 1843.

Are you well? Answer me that, and I am answered. I question everybody who comes from Curzon Street, and the answers I get are so various, that I must look into the matter myself. Who comes to see you? or rather, who does not come to see you? Who are the wise, the fair, the witty, who absent themselves from your parties, and still preserve their character for beauty, for wisdom, and for wit? I have been hybernating in my den, but begin to scent the approach of Spring, and to hear the hum of the metropolis, proposing to be there the 22d of February.

Poor ——! the model of all human prosperity! He seems to have been killed, as an animal is killed, for his plumpness. What other motive could there be? Or was it to liberate him from the ——? to terminate the frigid friendship, and to guard the —— from that heavy pleasantry with which, in moments of relaxation, —— is apt to overwhelm his dependants? I say, moments of relaxation; because this unbending posture of mind is never observed in him for more than a few seconds.

Mankind looked on with critical curiosity when Lady Holland dined with you; only general results reached me here; it would have been conducted, I am sure, with the greatest learning and skill on both sides. Ah! if Providence would but give us more Boswells! But your house deserves a private Boswell; think of one. Whom will you choose? I am too old, and too absent,—absent, I mean, in body.

I am studying the death of Louis XVI. Did he die heroically? or did he struggle on the scaffold? Was that struggle (for I believe there was one) for permission to speak? or from indignation at not being suffered to act for himself at the last moment, and to place himself under the axe? Make this out for me, if you please, and speak of it to me when I come to London. I don't believe the Abbé Edgeworth's "Son of St Louis, *montez au ciel!*" It seems necessary that great people should die with some sonorous and quotable saying. Mr Pitt said something not intelligible in his last moments: G. Rose made it out to be, "Save my country, Heaven!" The nurse, on being interrogated, said that he asked for barley-water.

I have seen nobody since I saw you, but persons in orders. My only varieties are vicars, rectors, curates, and every now and then (by way of turbot) an archdeacon. There is nobody in the country

but parsons. Remember, you gave me your honour and word that I should find you both in good health in February. Upon the faith of this promise I gave, and now give, you, my benediction.

SYDNEY SMITH.

494.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green Street, Feb. 28, 1843.

My dear Lady Grey,

Bulteel has stated his case to me, and I have given him my advice upon it. Has a bishop a right to make a condition of ordination, that which the law does not make a condition,—that no man shall be ordained who has not taken an English degree? Suppose he were to say that no man should be ordained who travels on the continent, or who has studied the Italian language, or who is not six feet high. Where does power end? How does he prove that the tutor knew this rule? What right has he to say, that a man (even knowing it) may not go to be ordained when he chooses?—and fifty other questions to which the case gives birth.

SYDNEY SMITH.

495.] TO RODERICK MURCHISON, ESQ.

Green Street, March 10, 1843.

Dear Murchison,

Many thanks for your address, which I will diligently read. May there not be some one among the infinite worlds where men and women are all made of stone? Perhaps of Parian marble? How infinitely superior to flesh and blood! What a Paradise for you, to pass eternity with a greywacke woman! Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—Very good indeed! The model of an address from a scientific man to practical men! Great zeal, and an earnest desire to make others zealous.

The style and language just what they ought to be. No lapses, no indiscretions. The only expression I quarrel with is monograph; either it has some conventional meaning among geologists, or it only means a pamphlet,—a book.

496.] TO MISS G. HARCOURT.

Green Street, March 29, 1843.

My dear Georgiana,

Was there ever such stupid trash as these humorous songs? If there is anything on earth makes me melancholy, it is a humorous song. Still I glory in the Widow E——, and am infinitely pleased with her good sense and the gentleness of her nature.

I did not think you were recovered at Mr Grenville's, but I thought you better at Belgrave Square. I took a medical survey of you, unobserved by you.

Always, dear Georgiana, your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

Note to Miss G. Harcourt.

My dear G.,
The pain in my knee
Would not suffer me
To drink your bohea.
I can laugh and talk,
But I cannot walk;
And I thought his Grace would stare
If I put my leg on a chair.
And to give the knee its former power,
It must be fomented for half an hour;
And in this very disagreeable state,
If I had come at all, I should have been too late.

497.] TO DR WHEWELL.

April 8, 1843.

My dear Sir,

My lectures are gone to the dogs, and are utterly forgotten. I knew nothing of moral philosophy, but I was thoroughly aware that I wanted £200 to furnish my house. The success, however, was prodigious; all Albemarle Street blocked up with carriages, and such an uproar as I never remember to have been excited by any other literary imposture. Every week I had a new theory about conception and perception; and supported by a natural manner, a torrent of words, and an impudence scarcely credible in this prudent age. Still, in justice to myself, I must say there were some good things in them. But good and bad are all gone. By "moral philosophy" you mean, as they mean at Edinburgh, mental philosophy; *i.e.*, the faculties of the mind, and the effects which our reasoning powers and our passions produce upon the actions of our lives.

I think the University uses you and us very ill, in keeping you so strictly at Cambridge. If Jupiter could desert Olympus for twelve days to feast with the harmless Ethiopians, why may not the Vice-Chancellor commit the graduating, matriculating world for a little time to the inferior deities, and thunder and lighten at the tables of the metropolis?

I hope you like Horner's "Life." It succeeds extremely well here. It is full of all the exorbitant and impracticable views so natural to very young men at Edinburgh; but there is great order,

great love of knowledge, high principle and feelings, which ought to grow and thrive in superior minds.

Our kind regards to Mrs Whewell. Ever, my dear Sir, sincerely yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

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498. TO RODERICK MURCHISON, ESQ.

Green Street, April 29, 1843.

Dear Murchison,

I am very much obliged to you for your book, which I shall read, though I shall not understand it; not from your want of light, but from my want of vision. I rejoice in your reputation; I know your industry and enterprise, and am always truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

499.] TO MISS BERRY.

June.

Dear Berries,

I dine on Saturday with the good Widow T——, and blush to say that I have no disposable day before the 26th; by which time you will, I presume, be plucking gooseberries in the suburban regions of Richmond. But think not, O Berries! that that distance, or any other, of latitude or longitude, shall prevent me from following you, plucking you, and eating you. Whatever pleasure men find in the raspberry, in the strawberry, in the coffee-berry, all these pleasures are to my taste concentrated in the May-Fair Berries. Ever theirs, SYDNEY SMITH.

500.] TO JOHN MURRAY, ESQ.

Green Street, June 4, 1843.

My dear Murray,

I should be glad to hear something of your life and adventures, and the more particularly so, as I learn you have no intention of leaving Edinburgh for London this season.

Mrs Sydney and I have been remarkably well, and are so at present; why, I cannot tell. I am getting very old in years, but do not feel that I am become so in constitution. My locomotive powers at seventy-three are abridged, but my animal spirits do not desert me. I am become rich. My youngest brother died suddenly, leaving behind him £100,000 and no will. A third of this therefore fell to my share, and puts me at my ease for my few remaining years. After buying into the Consols and the Reduced, I read Seneca "On the Contempt of Wealth!" What intolerable nonsense! I heard your *éloge* from Lord Lansdowne when I dined with him, and I need not say how heartily I concurred in it. Next to me sat Lord

Worsley, whose enclosed letter affected me, and very much pleased me. I answered it with sincere warmth. Pray return me the paper. Did you read my American Petition, and did you approve it?

. . . . . .

Why don't they talk over the virtues and excellencies of Lansdowne? There is no man who performs the duties of life better, or fills a high station in a more becoming manner. He is full of knowledge, and eager for its acquisition. His remarkable politeness is the result of good-nature, regulated by good sense. He looks for talents and qualities among all ranks of men, and adds them to his stock of society, as a botanist does his plants; and while other aristocrats are yawning among Stars and Garters, Lansdowne is refreshing his soul with the fancy and genius which he has found in odd places, and gathered to the marbles and pictures of his palace. Then he is an honest politician, a wise statesman, and has a philosophic mind; he is very agreeable in conversation, and is a man of an unblemished life. I shall take care of him in my Memoirs!

Remember me very kindly to the *maximus minimus*;* and to the Scotch Church. I have urged my friend the Bishop of Durham to prepare kettles of soup for the seceders, who will probably be wandering in troops over our northern counties. Ever your sincere friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

501.] TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

56 *Green Street, July* 1, 1843.

Dear Dickens,

Excellent! nothing can be better! You must settle it with the Americans as you can, but I have nothing to do with that. I have only to certify that the number is full of wit, humour, and power of description.

I am slowly recovering from an attack of gout in the knee, and am very sorry to have missed you. SYDNEY SMITH.

502.] TO LORD MAHON.

July 4, 1843.

My dear Lord Mahon,

I am only half recovered from a violent attack of gout in the knee, and I could not bear the confinement of dinner, without geting up and walking between the courses, or thrusting my foot on somebody else's chair, like the Archbishop of Dublin. For these reasons, I have been forced for some time, and am still forced, to

* Lord Jeffrey.

decline dinner engagements. I should, in a sounder state, have had great pleasure in accepting the very agreeable party you are kind enough to propose to me; but I shall avail myself, in the next campaign, of your kindness. I consider myself as well acquainted with Lady Mahon and yourself, and shall hope to see you here, as well as elsewhere. Pray present my benediction to your charming wife, who I am sure would bring any plant in the garden into full flower by looking at it, and smiling upon it. Try the experiment from mere curiosity. Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

503.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, July 17, 1843.

I have been sadly tormented with the gout in my knee. I had made great progress; but at the Archbishop's I walked too much, and the gout came back.

My place looks very beautiful, and I really enjoy the change. We were very sorry not to see you the evening you were to come to us; but the temptation not to come, where you have engaged to come, is more than you can resist: try refusing, and see what that will do! . Mr Grote was very agreeable and sensible, as he always is. I met Brunel at the Archbishop's, and found him a very lively and intelligent man. He said that when he coughed up the piece of gold, the two surgeons, the apothecary, and physician all joined hands, and danced round the room for ten minutes, without taking the least notice of his convulsed and half-strangled state. I admire this very much. Your sincere friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

504.] TO HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

Combe Florey, July 20, 1843.

Monseigneur,

I have taken the liberty to send your Grace the half of a Cheddar cheese. It is directed to you, at Nuneham Steventon. You will be glad to hear my knee is better a good deal. I have written two letters to the Reverend Leibnitz Newton Lavoisier W—— H——, to know when he means to come here, and can get no answer. There must be something wrong at the Poles or the Equator, or in the Milky Way. Pray jog him.

I am learning to sing some of Moore's songs, which I think I shall do to great perfection. I found here everything very comfortable and very beautiful; as I left everything, though in a very superior degree, at Nuneham.

I beg my kind regards to dear Georgiana, and remain, my dear Lord, with affection and respect, always yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

505.] TO MRS MEYNELL.

Combe Florey, 1843.

My dear Mrs Meynell,

Let me, if you please, have a word or two from you, to tell me of your new habitation. Saba seems to have been delighted with her visit. I see —— has been with you. How did you like her? To me she is agreeable, civil, and elegant, and by no means insipid. She has a kind of ready-money smile, and a three-per-cent. affability, which make her interesting.

We have been leading a very solitary life here. Hardly a soul has been here, but I am contented, as I value more every day the pleasures of indolence; and there is this difference between a large inn like Temple Newsam and a small public-house like Combe Florey, that you hold a numerous society, who make themselves to a certain degree independent of you, and do not weigh upon you; whereas, as I hold only two or three, the social weight is upon me. Luttrell is staying here. Nothing can exceed the innocence of our conversation. It is one continued eulogy upon man-and-woman-kind. You would suppose that two Arcadian old gentlemen, after shearing their flocks, had agreed to spend a week together upon curds and cream, and to indulge in gentleness of speech and softness of mind.

We have had a superb summer, but I am glad it is over; I am never happy till the fires are lighted. Where is your house in London? You cannot but buy one: it is absolutely impossible for Temple Newsam not to have a London establishment. God bless you, dear G.! Keep a little love for your old friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

506.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS, BART.

56 *Green Street, Aug.* 19, 1843.

My dear Philips,

I still believe in the return of business to Manchester, because I believe in the efficiency of capital, coals, and priority of skill, and cannot think that these advantages can be so soon eclipsed. How can the cotton trade be lessened, if the import of the raw article continues every three years to increase? If the demand remains the same, or nearly the same, and a mill, from the improvements of machinery, can do three times the work it used to do, of course two-thirds of the mills must be put down; and this apparent stagnation is considered a proof of the diminution of the trade, whereas it is evidence of its healthy state and its increase.

We have had little Tommy Moore here, who seemed very much pleased with his visit. Mrs Holland and her five children are here.

I cannot make out the Spanish revolution. I thought Espartero honest, brave, and to be well understood and esteemed by the Spanish people; but they all rise up with one accord, and kick him into that refuge of expelled monarchs—a British man-of-war.

I think the Conservatives begin to feel that Sir Robert Peel is a little damaged; still I should be sorry to see him out: he knows how to disguise liberal ideas, and to make them less terrible to the Foolery of a country. The Whigs delight to shock and affront, and to make their enemies ashamed that such a measure has not been carried out before. I am glad your journey is about to be shortened to London: the rail has been invaluable here,—it has brought us within fifty miles of London. The danger is of becoming, from our proximity to the railroad, too much in fashion; but I have a steady confidence in my own bad qualities. Your sincere friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

507.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, Aug. 31, 1843.

My dear Mrs Grote,

We shall be extremely glad to see Grote and you. I have not received the "Morning Post" you sent me, but I perceive, in other papers, my squib has burst, and caused some consternation.

I find I am getting old, and that my bodily feelings agree very well with the parish register. You seem to have had a very amusing life, with singing and dancing; but you cannot excite my envy by all the descriptions of your dramas and melodramas; you may as well paint the luxuries of barley-meal to a tiger, or turn a leopard into a field of clover. All this class of pleasures inspires me with the same nausea as I feel at the sight of rich plum-cake or sweatmeats; I prefer the driest bread of common life. I am in no degree answering your taste, but stating my own.

I wish Mrs —— would make us a visit here; she is so good-natured and amiable, that we should be really very glad to see her.

In coming here, you come to old age, and stupidity connected with old age: I have no recommendation to offer you, but a beautiful country and an affectionate welcome.

Peel seems to be a little damaged; it may be that Ireland cannot be governed by Tories. Three-fourths of the quarrels of England seem to be about Established Churches. Dr Holland is just come from Ireland with a diminished sense of the danger of the Repeal cry. My house is, as I tell my daughter, as full of Hollands as a gin-shop.

I have a letter from Ticknor, of Boston, who thinks the Pennsylvanians will pay; but I tell him when once a people have tasted

the luxury of not paying their debts, it is impossible to bring them back to the black broth of honesty. Yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

P.S.—The "Morning Post" is arrived. The author of the letter is Ticknor, Professor at Boston; it is honourable to me; but he magnifies my literary gains, and I much doubt if I have ever gained £1500 by my literary labours in the course of my life.

508.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 3, 1843.

Don't attempt to teach Sir —— —— the Northumberland method of farming. He cares for nothing but Piccadilly and the hospitals and Lady ——, and is miserable out of London. In coming home last week from a dinner-party, our carriage was stopped; and as I was preparing my watch and money, a man put his head into the window, and said, "We want Dr Holland." They took him out, and we have heard nothing of him since; we think of advertising.

I am thinking of going for a week or ten days to Ilfracombe. My only difficulty is to find out whether I like to go. I am very fond of a short visit to the sea, but the comforts of home become every day more important to old people; a bad bed, a cold room, a smoky grate,—these are the prices always paid for excursions. Ever affectionately yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

509.] TO LADY DUFFERIN.

Combe Florey: no date.

I am just beginning to get well from that fit of gout, at the beginning of which you were charitable enough to pay me a visit, and I said—the same Providence which inflicts gout creates Dufferins! We must take the good and the evils of life.

I am charmed, I confess, with the beauty of this country. I hope some day you will be charmed with it too. It banished, however, every Arcadian notion to see —— walk in at the gate to-day. I seemed to be transported instantly to Piccadilly, and the innocence went out of me.

I hope the process of furnishing goes on well. Attend, I pray you, to the proper selection of an easy chair, where you may cast yourself down in the weariness and distresses of life, with the absolute certainty that every joint of the human frame will receive all the comfort which can be derived from easy position and soft materials; then the glass, on which your eyes are so often fixed, knowing that you have the great duty imposed on the Sheridans,

of looking well. You may depend upon it, happiness depends mainly on these little things.

I hope you remain in perfect favour with Rogers, and that you are not admitted in any of the dress breakfast-parties. Remember me to the Norton: tell her I am glad to be sheltered from her beauty by the insensibility of age; that I shall not live to see its decay, but die with that unfaded image before my eyes: but don't make a mistake, and deliver the message to ——, instead of your sister. I remain, dear Lady Dufferin, very sincerely yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

An Enclosure.

September 22.

I am very much mortified that Lady Dufferin does not answer my letter. She has gone to Germany—she is sick—she has married Rogers—she . . . In short, all sorts of melancholy explanations came across me, till I found that the probable reason of her not answering my letter was, that she had not received it. I was strengthened in this belief from finding in my writing-desk the letter itself, which was written a month ago, and I conceived it to have been despatched the same day. I can write nothing better, for I can only repeat my admiration and regard.

SYDNEY SMITH.

510.] TO MISS BERRY.

Combe Florey: supposed 1843.

I am reading again Madame du Deffand. God forbid I should be as much in love with anybody (yourself excepted) as the poor woman was with Horace Walpole! Did I ever write to you before on this paper? It is called in the shops *criminal blush demy*. There is an *innocent blush demy*, which is cheaper.

I see some serious evil has befallen Ferguson of Raith. I lament it for your sake and for the general good, as he is an excellent person.

The smell of war is not over. I lament, and can conceive no greater misery. Among other evils, everybody must be ready for fighting; and I am not ready, but much the contrary. I am ten miles from the coast; a French steamer arrives in the night, and the first thing I hear in the morning is that the cushions of my pulpit are taken away, and my curate and churchwardens carried into captivity.

I was sorry to be forced to give —— such a beating, but he was very saucy and deserved it; however, now the battle is over, and I hope to live in good humour with all the world for the rest of my life, and to bury the war hatchet. I am glad to hear such excellent accounts of your health. Live as long as you can; nobody will be

more missed. Give my love, if you please, to Agnes and Lady Charlotte. If you return, all of you, in good health to London, I will speak to Milnes, and have a poem written in praise of Richmond.

SYDNEY SMITH.

511.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

1843.

My dear Lady Grey,

How is Lord Grey going on? I conjecture that what I read in the papers is true, and that your patient has really benefited by the gout, for such is the common order or sequence of medical events.

Suppose O'Connell to have used language violently seditious, that there is clear proof of it, and that it is possible to obtain anything like a fair trial, I think the Ministers have acted properly. The question is worth a battle or two: and, if the battle is to be fought (I mean the physical battle), it had better be at the time we choose, rather than at the time he chooses. We have no foreign war now; there is a good harvest, and an improving trade. I don't think it a bad time for taking O'Connell by the beard, and then, the next Parliament, pay the Catholic clergy.

My prediction is, that Peel will be driven out by the concessions to be made to Ireland, and that it will fall to Lord John to destroy the absurd Protestant Church in that kingdom. It will hardly do to pay the priests; the thing is gone beyond that now. You must remove the flockless pastors, or the payment of the priesthood will be useless.

I think the Duke quite wrong about the sites for the new churches. I should feel very disaffected against inequality of possession, if I could not get a place for my altar. I am almost for compelling the landed possessor, under the verdict of an appraising jury, to sell me land for such purposes. I become irritable at this oppression. I think Lord Grey and you will catch the kindred flame. Your affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

512.] TO LORD MURRAY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 29, 1843.

My dear Murray,

Jeffrey has written to me to say he means to dedicate his Essays to me. This I think a very great honour, and it pleases me very much. I am sure he ought to resign. He has very feeble health; a mild climate would suit the state of his throat. Mrs Jeffrey thinks he could not employ himself. Wives know a great deal about husbands; but, if she is right, I should be surprised. I have thought he had a canine appetite for books, though this sometimes declines in the decline of life. I am beautifying my

house in Green Street; a comfortable house is a great source of happiness. It ranks immediately after health and a good conscience. I see your religious war is begun in Scotland. I suppose Jeffrey will be at the head of the Free Church troops. Do you think he has any military talents?

You are, I hear, attending more to diet than heretofore. If you wish for anything like happiness in the fifth act of life, eat and drink about one-half what you *could* eat and drink. Did I ever tell you my calculation about eating and drinking? Having ascertained the weight of what I could live upon, so as to preserve health and strength, and what I did live upon, I found that, between ten and seventy years of age, I had eaten and drunk forty four-horse waggon-loads of meat and drink more than would have preserved me in life and health! The value of this mass of nourishment I considered to be worth seven thousand pounds sterling. It occurred to me that I must, by my voracity, have starved to death fully a hundred persons. This is a frightful calculation, but irresistibly true; and I think, dear Murray, your waggons would require an additional horse each!

Lord and Lady Lansdowne, who are rambling about this fine country, are to spend a day here next week. You must really come to see the West of England. From Combe Florey we will go together to Linton and Lymouth, than which there is nothing finer in this island. Two of our acquaintance dead this week,—Stewart Mackenzie and Bell! We must close our ranks. God bless you, my dear Murray! SYDNEY SMITH.

513.] *To the Rev. Sydney Smith.*

[Inserted with the permission of the Bishop of London.]

Fulham, Oct. 31, 1843.

My dear Sir,

I have been very much occupied during the last week, or I should have written to you before, to express the great pleasure which I have received from the intelligence of your kind and generous intentions towards young Mr Tate. It is a substantial proof of your regard for his father, and I really believe well deserved by the young man himself, who has been an active and useful curate of the parish which is now placed in his charge as vicar.

This arrangement will be most cheering and consolatory to poor Mrs Tate.* I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

C. J. LONDON.

* See Memoir, Chapter X.

514.] TO R. MONCKTON MILNES, ESQ.

Green Street, Nov. 8, 1843.

My dear Sir,

I am glad the business is in such good hands; it is the important measure of the day. As to any share I may take in it, it must depend upon my foot, ankle, and knee. If the Americans will not book up, they must take the consequences.

I am just going to pray for you at St Paul's, but with no very lively hope of success. SYDNEY SMITH.

515.] TO LORD MURRAY.

56 *Green Street, Nov.* 9, 1843.

My dear Murray,

I am afraid there is little chance of your coming so far as Combe Florey, but, if that could be done, it would give us sincere pleasure to show Mrs Murray and yourself our very pretty country; in the meantime I shall look forward to the more probable chance of seeing you here.

Jeffrey's legs have as little to support as any legs in the island; I cannot see why they should be out of order. I am delighted to find his general health so good. He is about to dedicate his Reviews to me. I said (what I sincerely felt) that I considered it as the greatest compliment ever paid to me. I shall be obliged to you for the herrings, and tell me, at the same time, how to dress them; but perhaps I mistake, and they are to be eaten naked.

Your exhortation comes too late. My letter in the "Chronicle" was published before yours to me arrived. It is generally found fault with as being too favourable, and to this I plead guilty; but I find I get more mild as I get older, and more unwilling to be severe. But if they do not (in business phrase) "book up" by Christmas, I shall set at them in good earnest. I have no sort of belief that they will ever pay, and I mean this week to sell out, I hope and believe at 61, five per cent. stock. Ever yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

516.] TO LADY ASHBURTON.

Dogmersfield Park, Dec. 3, 1843.

Many thanks, dear Lady Ashburton; but on the 7th I must be at Combe Florey, and remain there till my emersion in February. I return to London on Monday, and depart again for home immediately. All joking apart,—the real impediment to making visits is, that derangeable health which belongs to old age. I am never well when I arrive at a new house. The bread, the water, the hours, the bed, the change of bolster,—everything puts me out. I

recover in two or three days, and then it is time to depart. This made a wise man say, that a man should give over arguing at thirty, riding at sixty, and visiting at seventy.

I am truly sorry you are not well. I consider Lord Ashburton and you as good friends, and I rejoice in your rejoicing, and am sorry for the ills which happen to you. I agree with you that —— is in the high road to Puseyism, and that —— is the postboy who is driving her there. She does not mind in the least what I say to her, and calls me a priest of Baal.

Pray give my kind regards to the Plenipotentiary; first taking the necessary precaution to state where I live, my profession, age, or anything that will awaken in him a recollection that he has seen me before. Ever, dear Lady Ashburton, most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

517.] TO LORD MURRAY.

Green Street, Dec. 4, 1843.

. . . . . .

I have just read an admirable review of Senior's upon Ireland, for the next Edinburgh Review. Nothing can be wiser or better; at the same time, how can any two enlightened persons differ upon such a subject?

Pray do not put off coming to town next year, or, at least, coming to Combe Florey; for I am afraid I cannot put off dying much longer;—not that I am ill, but old. I am very glad you like my American Letters. The question is, will they make them angry or honest,—or both? I did not however mean to say what would make them pay, but to show them that their conduct had been shameful in not paying before, and should leave upon them this feeling, whether they ultimately paid or not.

Tell William Murray, with my kindest regards, to get for you, when he comes to town, a book called "Arabiniana, or Remains of Mr Serjeant Arabin,"—very witty and humorous. It is given away —not sold, but I have in vain endeavoured to get a copy.

SYDNEY SMITH.

518.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Taunton, Dec. 10, 1843.

My dear Lady Grey,

I hope you were amused with my attack upon the Americans. They really deserved it. It is a monstrous and increasing villany. Fancy a meeting in Philadelphia, convened by public advertisement, where they came to resolutions that the debt was too great for the people to pay, that the people could not pay it, and ought not to

pay it! I have not a conception that the creditors will ever have a single shilling.

Tell Lord Grey I recommend to his attention, in the forthcoming Edinburgh Review, an article upon Ireland by Senior, the Master in Chancery, which I think admirable; it contains, in my humble estimation, an enumeration of the medicines, and a statement of the treatment, necessary for your distracted country; in defence of which I always state that it has at least produced Lady Grey.

I keep my health tolerably well: occasionally fits of gout, but my eyes are in good preservation; and while I can read and can write, I have no care about age. I should add another condition,—that I must have no pain. I am reading the Letters to George Selwyn, by which I am amused. Many of them are written with wit and spirit; they bring before me people of whom I know a little; and the notes are so copious, that the book makes a history of those times; certainly, a history of the manners and mode of life of the upper orders of society.

Remember me very kindly and affectionately to my friend and patron Lord Grey, and believe me as affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

519.] TO LORD MURRAY.

Combe Florey, Dec. 17, 1843.

My dear Murray,

Nothing can be better than the grouse; they arrived in perfect preservation, and gave great satisfaction. Lady —— is staying here. She seems to be a very sensible and very worthy person. I must do her the justice to say that when my jokes are explained to her, and she has leisure to reflect upon them, she laughs very heartily.

I am glad you like my American Letters. I see the rebound has taken place, and all the papers combine in abusing me. My firm opinion is, that they will never pay. The Legislature dares not impose the tax,—the people would never pay it. I shall not be unobservant of what is said in the American papers, and, if needs be, address a few more last words to Jonathan.

Be sure that you keep to your plan of coming to England at Easter, to be fresh dyed. Depend upon it, it will do you good.

SYDNEY SMITH.

520.] TO MRS GROTE.

December 18, 1843.

My dear Mrs Grote,

I hope the Irish fossils have reached you by this time, and that they are approved of. . . . .

My bomb has fallen very successfully in America, and the list of killed and wounded is extensive. I have several quires of paper sent me every day, calling me monster, thief, atheist, deist, &c. Duff Green sent me three pounds of cheese, and a Captain Monigan a large barrel of American apples. The last news from America will, I think, lower the Pennsylvanian funds.

I wonder how you are occupied. I am reading Montaigne. He thinks aloud, that is his great merit, but does not think remarkably well; mankind have improved in thinking and writing since that period. Have you read Senior's article for the forthcoming Edinburgh Review? It is excellent, and does him great credit.

I went, while in town, one night to the Sartoris', where Mrs Sartoris was singing divinely. Your sincere friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

521.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, Dec. 23, 1843.

Dear Mrs Grote,

You are so energetic, that you never attend to anything in particular, but are always lost in generalities. I sent you a letter of Jeffrey's, which you have not returned. Are you satisfied that your friend Faucher was treated as well as Lord Jeffrey's health would permit?

You complain of the smallness of the potatoes: let me suggest the romantic plan of having the potatoes picked; the large ones reserved for your table, the small ones for the pigs. It is by this ingenious and complicated process that the potatoes you get from the greengrocer in London are managed. There is no accounting for tastes. The potatoes I sent appear to me to be excellent.

You have planted seven hundred firs; the number is scarcely credible. Have you read the Swedish method of planting, under which the tree grows fourteen feet in one year? It consists in burying half a pound of tallow candles with every fir planted. I cannot believe it; but it is difficult to disbelieve what is published in a grave work. Ever your sincere friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

522.] TO SIR GEORGE PHILIPS.

Combe Florey, Dec. 28, 1843.

My dear Philips,

I am going to Bowood for five or six days next week. I shall find Bobus there, who will come on from thence here. He is very blind, but bears up against the evils of age heroically. The great question of the next session will be the support of the Catholic clergy. Will Peel dare to bring it on? Will he be able to carry

it in and out of the House, if he does? Longman has printed my American Letters in the shape of a small pamphlet, and it has a very great circulation. I receive presents of cheese and apples from Americans who are advocates for paying debts, and very abusive letters in print and in manuscript from those who are not. I continue to think the Pennsylvanians will not pay; and so thinks, as I hear, Jones Loyd. Your old and affectionate friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

523.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

December, 1843.

My dear Saba,

I will bear in mind the name and misfortunes of Mr B., and if any opportunity occurs, will endeavour to make myself useful to him; but, as you may suppose, I am up to the ears in clergymen. Your mother sent you the flaming panegyric of me in the "Morning Chronicle" (and sent it at my desire, because I am sure it would give you pleasure, as I see you have an honest pride in the praises of your father); whether right or wrong others must determine, if any one thinks about it; but I should really deserve some praise if I could write as well as my eulogist.

Your mother and I mean to have a twelfth-cake, and draw kings and queens alone. Pray desire G. Hibbert to let us know whether and when he will come, and don't forget this message. Many thanks for your kindness in getting Charlotte Loch * a place; the misfortune of the poor girl is that she has not been taught millinery and mantuamaking Give my love to all your party; and believe me, your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

524.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, December.

My dearest Daughter,

Many pardons for not having written to you according to promise; but the calf and the kitchen-maid both kept their beds, George Strong had quinsy, and the shafts were broken. I had a very agreeable journey down, going in the public carriages,—an infinitely more agreeable method than in a private vehicle. I felt as little fatigue as in my arm-chair in this library, and could have gone on to the world's end without being tired.

The whole country is divided between the Clerk of the Peace and Captain Mars, who has challenged him. Mars, the God of War, challenging the Clerk of the Peace! I am studying the question deeply, as is Cecil.

Not a breath of wind; a solemn stillness; all nature fast asleep;

* One of his parishioners, about whom he was interested.

Storm and Tempest bound over to keep the peace! There never was such a period.

Love to Holland and the children. Ever your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

525.] TO HIS GRANDCHILD.

On sending him a Letter over weight.

Oh, you little wretch! your letter cost me fourpence. I will pull all the plums out of your puddings; I will undress your dolls and steal their under petticoats; you shall have no currant-jelly to your rice; I will kiss you till you cannot see out of your eyes; when nobody else whips you, I will do so; I will fill you so full of sugar-plums that they shall run out of your nose and ears; lastly, your frocks shall be so short that they shall not come below your knees. Your loving grandfather, SYDNEY SMITH.

526.] TO MISS BERRY. 1843.

I hope, my dear friend, you are well. I met the lofty P—— on the railroad, and he gave me some account of you, but not enough for my ravenous desire of your welfare. Oh, happy woman! the suburban beauties of Richmond were not enough; but Providence sent you ——, a woman of piety and ancient faith; and the *preux chevalier, sans peur et sans reproche!*

Mrs Sydney and I are tolerably well. The diminished temperature has restored my locomotive powers, such as they are; but in the dog-days I could not move.

We have had Tommy Moore and Lady Morley, and a few more unknown to fame. Dr Holland has just made a rush from Combe Florey to Jerusalem. By the by, I saw a piece of news the other day, in which a gentleman made his good fortune known to the world in the public papers. "Last week the Rev. Elias Johnson was made Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Jerusalem!" I should like to know what his questions are to the candidates.

I presume you have never been a day without crowds. Has the Davy glittered at Richmond? By deaths and marriages the world is thinned since we met. My kindest regards to Lady Charlotte, to both of you, and those of Mrs Sydney. Yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

527.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.* *No date.*

Dear Lady Morley,

Pray understand me rightly: I do not give the Bluecoat theory

* This letter seems to have been after a conversation given in the Narrative, Chapter XI., where the subject is alluded to.

as an established fact, but as a highly probable conjecture; look at the circumstances. At a very early age young Quakers disappear; at a very early age the Coat-boys are seen; at the age of seventeen or eighteen young Quakers are again seen; at the same age the Coat-boys disappear: who has ever heard of a Coat-man? The thing is utterly unknown in natural history. Upon what other evidence does the migration of the grub into the aurelia rest? After a certain number of days the grub is no more seen, and the aurelia flutters over his relics. That such a prominent fact should have escaped our naturalists is truly astonishing; I had long suspected it, but was afraid to come out with a speculation so bold, and now mention it as protected and sanctioned by you.

Dissection would throw great light upon the question; and if our friend —— would receive two boys into his house about the time of their changing their coats, great service would be rendered to the cause.

Our friend Lord Grey, not remarkable for his attention to natural history, was a good deal struck with the novelty and ingenuity of the hypothesis. I have ascertained that the young Bluecoat infants are fed with drab-coloured pap, which looks very suspicious. More hereafter ont his interesting subject. Where real science is to be promoted, I will make no apology to your Ladyship for this intrusion. Yours truly, SYDNEY SMITH.

528.] *From the Countess of Morley.*

No date.

Had I received your letter two days since, I should have said your arguments and theory were perfectly convincing, and that the most obstinate sceptic must have yielded to them; but I have come across a person in that interval who gives me information which puts us all at sea again. That the Bluecoat boy should be the larva of the Quaker in Great Britain is possible, and even probable, but we must take a wider view of the question; and here, I confess, I am bewildered by doubts and difficulties. The Bluecoat is an indigenous animal—not so the Quaker; and now be so good as to give your whole mind to the facts I have to communicate. I have seen and talked much with Sir R. Ker Porter on this interesting subject. He has travelled over the whole habitable globe, and has penetrated with a scientific and scrutinising eye into regions hitherto unexplored by civilised man; and yet *he* has never seen a Quaker baby. He has lived for years in Philadelphia (the national nest of Quakers); he has roamed up and down Broadways and lengthways in every nook and corner of Pennsylvania; and yet he never saw a Quaker baby; and what is new and most striking,

never did he see a Quaker lady in a situation which gave hope that a Quaker baby might be seen hereafter. This is a stunning fact, and involving the question in such impenetrable mystery as will, I fear, defy even your sagacity, acuteness, and industry to elucidate. But let us not be checked and cast down; truth is the end and object of our research. Let us not bate one jot of heart and hope, but still bear up and steer our course right onward. Yours most truly,

F. MORLEY.

529.] TO THE COUNTESS OF MORLEY.*

. . . . . .

Noble countenance, expressing quite sufficient when at rest, too much when in activity. Middling voice, provincial accent, occasional bad taste, language often very happy, with flights of mere eloquence; not the vehicle of reasoning or profound remark. Very difficult, when the sermon was over, to know what it was about; and the whole effect rather fatiguing and tiresome. Dear Lady Morley, pray tell me whether you agree with me. Most truly yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

530.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, Jan. 3, 1844.

My dear Mrs Grote,

You have seen more than enough of my giving the living of Edmonton to a curate. The first thing the unscriptural curate does, is to turn out his fellow-curate, the son of him who was vicar before his father. Is there not some story in Scripture of the debtor who had just been excused his debt, seizing his fellow-servant by the throat, and casting him into prison? The Bishop, the Dean and Chapter, and I have in vain expostulated; he perseveres in his harshness and cruelty.

Senior has just left us; he seems to have gained great credit from his Irish article. I am always very much pleased with your commendation. I am really sincere in my love of what is honest and liberal, and I wrote with no lack of moral wrath.

I am going on Thursday to Bowood, where my brother is; he returns with me. Everett is coming here, and on the 15th the Hibberts. Mrs Sydney is uncommonly well; I thought I was going to be very ill during the close, muggy weather, but this frost has restored me to life; and so I return to my text, by asking why you suppose your letters are not agreeable?

SYDNEY SMITH.

* This was written after hearing Irving preach.

531.] TO MRS ——.

Combe Florey, Jan. 23, 1844.

Many thanks, dear Mrs ——, for your agreeable letter. You seem to be leading a happy life; making a pleasing exception to the generality of mankind, who are miserable. —— writes to me at long intervals. I think I am falling into desuetude and disgrace.

Your list of French visitors is, I dare say, very splendid, but I am so ignorant of French society, that they are most of them unknown to me; I mean, unknown by reputation, as well as personally. I should like more of a mixture. You seem to have too much talent in your drawing-room. I met Berryer at the Chancellor's in London, and was much struck with his physiognomy and manner.

Poor Miss Fox (as I believe you know) has had a slight paralytic stroke. She was a most beautiful specimen of human excellence. I have been in the country ever since the middle of December, and know nothing about men and things. I am tolerably well, but intolerably old.

Jeffrey is laid up with a bad leg, which is getting rather serious. Have you seen his publication in four volumes, dedicated to me? I told him it was the greatest compliment I had ever received in my life.

I receive every day letters of abuse and congratulation from America, for my three epistles. I continue to think they will never pay, and I continue to value you very much. I am very glad Mr —— is better, and I beg you to accept my affectionate benediction,

SYDNEY SMITH.

532.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

January, 1844.

Dear Saba,

People of wealth and rank never use ugly names for ugly things. Apoplexy is an affection of the head; paralysis is nervousness; gangrene is pain and inconvenience in the extremities. All that I heard from D——, who falls into this kind of subterfutive language, was that Miss —— was indisposed, and it was only after your letter that I got anything like the truth from him; she is certainly in danger, and he says that he should not be surprised to hear of her death. Poor dear ——! So it is, that the best as well as the worst disappear. I am heartily sorry for the ——. Bobus and Mr Everett are staying here. God bless you! Ever affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

533.] TO MRS HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, 1844.

My dear Saba,

Are you sure that you are sufficiently acquainted with what the strength of cider ought to be, to determine that your cider has been adulterated? The farmer has the character of being a remarkably honest man, and his reputation is at stake. Send me down here a couple of bottles, which I will compare with his cider. George Hibbert is here. Your mother has no illness, but much *malaise*. I complain of nothing but weakness, and want of nervous energy; I look as strong as a cart-horse, but I cannot get round the garden without resting once or twice, so deficient am I in nervous energy. I doubt whether to attribute this to old age, and to consider it as inevitable, or to blame this soft, and warm, and disinvigorating climate. I believe if I were at Ramsgate or Brighton I should be strong.

I think Bobus much too adventurous for the powers of his sight; he lives in constant danger, but not fear, of a tremendous fall; and to walk, as he does, in the streets, is positive insanity. His blindness is singular; he can see a mote, but not a beam,—the smaller anything is, the better he sees it; he could see David, but would run against Goliath.

We propose to be in London about the 20th, of which you may inform a fond and expecting capital. I have said nothing to your mother of the marble chimney-pieces * in the drawing-rooms; I think she will faint with joy when she sees them. God bless you, dear Saba! My kind regards to Holland. Your affectionate father,

SYDNEY SMITH.

534.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, Jan. 31, 1844.

My dear Mrs Grote,

Your fall entirely proceeded from your despising the pommel of the saddle,—a species of pride to which many ladies may attribute fractures and death. When I rode (which, I believe, was in the middle of the last century) I had a holding-strap fixed somewhere near the pommel, and escaped many falls by it.

Nothing ever does happen at Combe Florey, and nothing has happened.

. . . . . .

Old age is not so much a scene of illness as of *malaise*. I think every day how near I am to death. I am very weak, and very breathless. Everett, the American Minister, has been here at the same time with my eldest brother. We all liked him, and were

* See Memoir, Chapter VIII.

confirmed in our good opinion of him. A sensible, unassuming man, always wise and reasonable.

. . . . . .

"If I take this dose of calomel, shall I be well immediately?" "Certainly not," replies the physician. "You have been in bed these six weeks; how can you expect such a sudden cure? But I can tell you you will never be well without it, and that it will tend materially to the establishment of your health." So, the pay to the Catholic Clergy. They will not be immediately satisfied by the measure, but they will never be satisfied without it, and it will have a considerable tendency to produce that effect. It will not supersede other medicines, but it is an indispensable preliminary to them.

If you dine with Lady ——, it is a sure proof that you are a virtuous woman; she collects the virtuous. I have totally forgotten all about the American debt, but I continue to receive letters and papers from the most remote corners of the United States, with every vituperative epithet which human rage has invented. Your affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

535.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, February, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

We have read every account of Lord Carlisle, and inquired of every one who could give us any information, and have been unwilling to add to your cares and distractions by inquiries which might put you under the necessity of writing. Pray say all that is kind, and friendly, and affectionate, from this family to him. To be cared and thought about is some pleasure to the sick, even when that solicitude comes from a country parson and his wife. The danger seems to be over; the business now is to mitigate pain, and to amuse. Mrs Sydney is tolerably well; I cannot breathe, or walk, and am very weak; in other respects I am well also. We go to London on Tuesday, and are busy packing up ten times as many things as we shall ever want.

I beg you do not answer this note; it requires none. I only write it to say, don't imagine we are inattentive to what is passing at Castle Howard, because we respect your time and are sensible of your many serious cares. Castle Howard befriended me when I wanted friends; I shall never forget it, till I forget all.

I remain, with respectful affection, your friend,

SYDNEY SMITH.

536.] TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

56 *Green Street, Feb.* 21, 1844.

Dear Dickens,

Many thanks for the "Christmas Carol," which I shall immediately proceed upon, in preference to six American pamphlets I found upon my arrival, all promising immediate payment! Yours ever, SYDNEY SMITH.

537.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

I give two dinners next week to the following persons, whom I enumerate, as I know Lady Georgiana loves a little gossip. First dinner—Lady Holland, Eastlake, Lord and Lady Monteagle, Luttrell, Lord Auckland, Lord Campbell, Lady Stratheden, Lady Dunstanville, Baring Wall, and Mr Hope. Second dinner—Lady Charlemont, Lord Glenelg, Lord and Lady Denman, Lord and Lady Cottenham, Lord and Lady Langdale, Sir Charles Lemon, Mr Hibbert, Landseer, and Lord Clarendon.

The Ministry are very much vexed at the majority of Lord Ashley, and are making great efforts to beat him; and it does seem to be absurd to hinder a woman of thirty from working as long as she pleases; but mankind are getting mad with humanity and Samaritanism.

I preached the other Sunday a sermon on peace, and against the excessive proneness to war; and I read them two or three extracts from the accounts of victories. It was very much liked. I shall try the same subject again,—a subject utterly untouched by the clergy.

I am reading the Letters to George Selwyn, which entertain me a good deal, though I think it a shameful publication. The picture of the year is to be Jairus's Daughter, by Eddis.

We are all tolerably well here, and send a thousand regards to all. God bless you! SYDNEY SMITH.

538.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green Street, Feb. 28, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am quite delighted to learn from so many sources that Lord Grey is so much better, and I trust we shall see him in town after Easter.

What news have I to tell you? Nothing but what the papers will tell you better. Howick's speech is universally praised for its honesty and ability. I think O'Connell will have two years' im-

prisonment, and the Government and the Irish Courts have come off much better than it was supposed they would do.

We have not very good accounts from Castle Howard. There is a rumour that Lord Ashburton is employed in holy flirting with the Pope. The common idea, that a *præmunire* is incurred by these flirtations, or that there is any law enacting penalties for communications with his Holiness, is erroneous.

Four volumes of Burke's "Letters to the Marquis of Rockingham," are about to be published. I am not sorry to come to London. I have been living upon commonplaces and truisms for three months. I always fatten and stupefy on such diet; I want to lose flesh and gain understanding. The new Lady —— dined with Lady —— on Sunday. I thought she would have fainted. The page always has sal-volatile at hand for first introductions.

Affectionately yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

539.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

God bless you, and support you in great trials, such as the illness of so good and great a man, and one who has played so distinguished a part in the events of these times! Convey to him my ardent wishes for his safety and exemption from pain. I am a great believer in his constitution, and feel sure that we shall yet have many conversations about the wonderful things of this world.

I send you a very honest and sensible sermon,—so little like most sermons, that I think our dear Earl might read it, or have it read to him; but let that honest Howick read it, who loves everything that is bold, and true, and honest; and send it back to me when it is done with. Only think of the iniquity of young ——. No sooner does he find himself extricated from poverty and misery, than the first thing he does is to turn out a poor curate, the son of the former vicar, before his father! His conduct has been quite abominable.

I go on Tuesday, for two or three days, to Bowood, where a large party is assembled: amongst the rest, Lady Holland. We are dying of heat. I sleep with my windows open every night. The birds are all taken in, and building; the foolish flowers are blowing. Human creatures alone are in the secret, and know what is to happen in a week or two.

I met Mr —— in town. I have never joined in the general admiration for this person. I think his manners rude and insolent. His conversation is an eternal persiflage, and is therefore wearisome. It seems as if he did not think it worth while to talk sense or seriousness before his company, and that he had a right to

abandon himself to any nonsense which happened to come uppermost; which nonsense many of his company remembered to have come uppermost often before. I receive every day from America letters and pamphlets without end. I verily believe the United States are cracking. A nation cannot exist in such a state of morals.

Give my kindest and most affectionate regards to Lord Grey; and believe me ever, dear Lady Grey, your sincere and affectionate friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

540.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green Street, March 9, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

With your occupations and anxieties, I hold you entirely acquitted for not writing to me, and pray let this be understood between us. I take so much interest in Lord Grey's recovery, that I am rejoiced to see your handwriting, but always afraid that your own health will suffer by gratifying the affectionate curiosity of your friends.

The Whigs and Democrats are full of a notion that O'Connell is not to be punished; that the Government, yielding to the opinion that his trial has been unfair, are not to bring him up for judgment. I am not of this opinion. I think, unless their own law-officers were to tell them that this trial had been unfair, the Government are bound to deal with O'Connell as they would with any one else; and I believe they will do so. I have heard some of our English judges say his sentence ought to be for two years. As for the danger of shutting him up, if you cannot do that, then there is a civil war; and the sooner it is fought out the better.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Kindest regards to my Lord.

SYDNEY SMITH.

541.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am beginning Burke's Letters, or rather, have gone through one volume; full of details which do not interest me, and there are no signs yet of that beautiful and fruitful imagination which is the great charm of Burke. With the politics of so remote a period I do not concern myself.

The weather is improved here, and the harvest is got in; and a very good harvest it is.

I hope Lord Grey observes the ministerial relaxations towards the Catholics. It is a very difficult question to know what to do

with O'Connell. The only question is the pacification of Ireland, and the effect that his detention or liberation would produce upon that country. All private pique and anger must be swallowed up in this paramount object. Lord Heytesbury is a man of good sense. I have no fear of a French war as long as Louis Philippe is alive: and live he will, for they cannot hit him, and seem to have left off shooting at him in despair. After that, nothing but nonsense and folly; but before then, I shall probably be dead myself.

You talk of your climate; I dare say it has its evils, but nothing so bad as the enervating character of this. It would unstring the nerves of a giant, and demoralise the soul of Cato. We have just sent off a cargo of London people, who have been staying here three weeks. They say that all their principles and virtues are gone! My kindest regards to your noble patient.

SYDNEY SMITH.

542.] TO MISS G. HARCOURT.

Combe Florey, 1844.

My dear Georgiana,

I set off in despair of reaching home, but, on the contrary, Mrs Sydney got better every scream of the railroad, and is now considerably improved. Many thanks for your kind and friendly inquiries. I was confined three days in London waiting for Mrs Sydney's recovery: they seemed months. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the country; I am forced to own that.

I have been reading Arnold's Life, by Stanley. Arnold seems to have been a very pious, honest, learned, and original man.

I hope the Archbishop has resumed the use of his legs; for if an archbishop be a pillar of the Church, and the pillar cannot stand, what becomes of the incumbent weight? And neither of us, dear Georgiana, would consent to survive the ruin of the Church. You would plunge a poisoned pin into your heart, and I should swallow the leaf of a sermon dipped in hydrocyanic acid. —— would probably rejoice in the loss of us both, for in her Church the greater the misery, the greater the happiness; they rejoice in woe, and wallow in dolours.

Be a good girl, and write me a line every now and then, to tell me about my old friends; and believe me to be always your affectionate friend,

S. S.

543.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Green Street, Grosvenor Square,
March 27, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I think Channing an admirable writer. So much sense and eloquence! such a command of language! Yet admirable as his sermon on war is, I have the vanity to think my own equally good, quite as sensible, quite as eloquent, as full of good principle and fine language; and you will be the more inclined to agree with me in this comparison, when I tell you that I preached in St Paul's the identical sermon which Lord Grey so much admires. I thought I could not write anything half so good, so I preached Channing.

You can hardly expect to go on straightforward in recovering; sometimes you will stop, sometimes recover twice as much in one week as you have done in three weeks preceding. If this day is with you as it is with us, it ought to be the first of going out. It is real spring.

What an odd state politics are in! It is not at all impossible that Ministers will go out. God bless you, dear Lady Grey!

SYDNEY SMITH.

544.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

My dear Lady Grey,

Your account seems good of Lord Grey. I envy him the taste of fresh air after such a long confinement, to say nothing of the fine feeling which cessation from pain produces; not that I would be ill, but that I consider these feelings as some little abatement of evil.

The Government are to have this year, I understand, a very splendid budget; but obtained, of course, by the pernicious auxiliary of the Income Tax.

What a singular event,—these divisions upon the working hours of the common people! The protection of children is perhaps right; but everything beyond is mischief and folly. It is generally believed, that if the Ten Hours Bill is carried, Government will resign. I am a decided duodecimalist. —— is losing his head. When he brings forward his Suckling Act, he will be considered as quite mad. No woman to be allowed to suckle her own child without medical certificates. Three classes—viz., free sucklers, half sucklers, and spoon-meat mothers. Mothers whose supply is uncertain, to suckle upon affidavit! How is it possible that an Act of Parliament can supply the place of nature and natural affection? Have you any nonsense equal to this in Northumberland?

I think I could write a good sermon against war, but I doubt if I shall preach any more. It makes me ill; I get violently excited, and tire myself to death.

—— is gone to Paris. He made a sensation at the Drawing-room, by asking the Queen, at some length, if he could take parcels or letters for her!

I have some thoughts of going to Brighton to-morrow, but I believe indolence will prevail. I pray for fine weather for Lord Grey. It will be his cure when it does come. God bless you!

S. S.

545.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

April 22, 1844.

I hear from all quarters, dear Lady Grey, that Lord Grey is going on as well as possible; that is, that he is keeping pace with my hopes and wishes. Has Lord Grey read the Edinburgh Review? The article on Barrère is by Macaulay, that upon Lord St Vincent by Barrow. I think the latter very entertaining; but it was hardly worth while to crucify Barrère: Macaulay might as well have selected Turpin.

I have no knews to tell you. It is generally thought the Duke of Wellington has been unguarded about the Directors. Peel's bank plan is admired and approved; so is the appointment of Hardinge. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

546.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

May 29, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I am afraid you are not going on so well as heretofore, and I am almost afraid to ask you your present condition: therefore do as you are inclined, and if to send me such news as you have to send gives you pain, do not send it.

Mrs Sydney had a sharp attack of pain yesterday, which prevented us from going to Lady Essex's play, which has been acted with universal approbation in Belgrave Square. I was very glad not to be there, as I am sure I should have been tired to death. If real actors cannot amuse me, how should pretended actors do so? Can mock-turtle please where real turtle is disliked?

I think we now have O'Connell safe between walls. I look upon his punishment as one of the most useful events which have taken place in my time. It vindicates the law, shows the subject that the Government is not to be braved, and puts an end for many years to the blustering and bullying of Ireland. Their perseverance is

creditable to Ministers. There was, my dear Lady Grey, a serious ntention to go out; but it was too ridiculous.

I am inclined to think you are going on tolerably well, for I ask everybody who is likely to know, and make out the best account I can; but your own case puzzles me.

I am going to dine with —— to-day. The rumour increases of ner having murdered Dr ——. The question is, Where is he? What was that large box taken away at two in the morning?

Read Arnold's Life, by Stanley, and Twiss's Life of Lord Eldon. The latter is not badly done, and I think it would much amuse Lord Grey, as it is the history almost of his times. Lord Eldon was the bigoted enemy of every sort of improvement; and retarded by his influence, for more than twenty-five years, those changes which the state of the country absolutely required. Ever affectionately yours,

SYDNEY SMITH.

[47.] TO M. EUGÈNE ROBIN.*

Paris, June 29, 1844.

Sir,

Your application to me does me honour, and requires, on your part, no sort of apology.

It is scarcely possible to speak much of self, and I have little or nothing to tell which has not been told before in my preface.

I am seventy-four years of age; and being Canon of St Paul's in London, and a rector of a parish in the country, my time is divided equally between town and country. I am living amongst the best society in the metropolis, and at ease in my circumstances; in tolerable health, a mild Whig, a tolerating Churchman, and much given to talking, laughing, and noise. I dine with the rich in London, and physic the poor in the country; passing from the sauces of Dives to the sores of Lazarus. I am, upon the whole, a happy man; have found the world an entertaining world, and am thankful to Providence for the part allotted to me in it. If you wish to become more informed respecting the actor himself, I must refer you to my friend Van de Weyer, who knows me well, and is able (if he will condescend to do so) to point out the good and the evil within me. If you come to London, I hope you will call on me, and enable me to make your acquaintance; and in the meantime I beg you to accept every assurance of my consideration and respect.

SYDNEY SMITH.

* M. Eugène Robin had made an application to Mr Sydney Smith, through Mr Van de Weyer, for some particulars of his life, of which he wished to give a sketch in the "Revue des Deux Mondes."

548.] TO HIS EXCELLENCY M. VAN DE WEYER.

Combe Florey, July 31, 1844.

Dear Van de Weyer,

Have not some letters been published in modern times, containing the remonstrances of Alva to Philip, and of Philip to Alva, against the cruelties practised by the Spaniards in the Low Countries, and recommending milder measures? and if so, pray tell me in what book such letters are to be found. Have you seen a History of Holland, in three volumes, by a Mrs Davis, published by Walton, Strand; or heard any character of it?

How do you do, and all the family? Will you come to the West —I mean to Combe Florey—in the month of August? and what day? Will you believe me (as you safely may) yours sincerely,

SYDNEY SMITH.

549.] TO MRS GROTE.

Combe Florey, July, 1844.

Dear Mrs Grote,

. . . . . .

Our squire died the very day we came home. Do you want any land?

I have been reading the Life of Arnold of Rugby, who seems to be a learned, pure, and honest Liberal; and with much zeal and unaffected piety. From this I proceeded to the life of the most heartless, bigoted, and mischievous of human beings, who passed a long life in perpetuating all sorts of abuses, and in making money by them.

I am afraid this country does look enchantingly beautiful; you know the power truth has over me. There is nothing new,—I will not say under the sun, for we have no sun in England,—but under the fogs and clouds. The best thing I have seen for some time is the declaration of the Government of their good intentions towards the Roman Catholics.

I am not expecting any particular person, but generally, all mankind and womankind. . . . Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

550.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, August, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

I have been leading a very musical life lately. There is an excellent musical family living in London; and finding them all ill, and singing flat, I brought them down here for three weeks, where they have grown extremely corpulent, and have returned to London with no other wish than to be transported after this life to

this paradise of Combe Florey. Their singing is certainly very remarkable, and the little boy, at the age of seven, composes hymns; I mean, sets them to music. I have always said that if I were to begin life again, I would dedicate it to music; it is the only cheap and unpunished rapture upon earth.

—— —— has not yet signified her intentions under the sign manual; but a thousand rumours reach me, and my firm belief is, she will come. I have spoken to the sheriff, and mentioned it to the magistrates. They have agreed to address her; and she is to be escorted from the station by the yeomanry. The clergy are rather backward; but I think that, after a little bashfulness, they will wait upon her. Brunel, assisted by the ablest philosophers, is to accompany her upon the railroad; and they have been so good as to say that the steam shall be generated from soft water, with a slight infusion of chamomile flowers.

I am glad to see that Sir Robert Peel is softening a little towards the Catholics. That is the great point, in comparison of which Pomaré and Morocco are nothing.

I think we shall go for some days to the sea-side. I wish we could find such an invigorating air as you have at Scarborough; but our atmosphere is soft, demoralising, and debilitating. All love of duty, all sense of propriety, are extinguished in these enervating climates. The only one of my Yorkshire virtues which I retain, is a sincere regard for Castle Howard and its inhabitants; to whom health and prosperity, and every earthly blessing! From your obliged and sincere friend, SYDNEY SMITH.

551.] TO DR HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, August, 1844.

My dear Holland,

I ought to have answered your letter before, but I have been so strenuously employed in doing nothing, that I have not had time to do so. Whatever Mrs Sydney may say of herself, I think she is very languid from her late attack in London, and that she needs the sea-side; and there I mean to go for some days. Jeffrey is under the care of a committee, consisting of Mr and Mrs Empson, his wife, the footman, and a Highland nurse, and they report to his admirers, consisting of several scores of young ladies, and others well advanced in years; it is a science by itself, the management of that little man, and I am afraid, unless you could affect all the committee simultaneously with the principal, your science would be in vain.

I hope you will have good weather for your journey. Beg of all your party, when they come in at night, fatigued, hungry, and exhausted, to sit down and write their journals, but not to show them

to me. I keep clear of gout, but always imagine I am going off in an apoplexy or palsy, and that the death-warrant is come down. I saw the other day, in midday, a ball of fire, with a tail as long as the garden, rush across the heavens, and descend towards the earth; that it had some allusion to me and my affairs I did not doubt, but I could not tell what, till I found the cow had slipped her calf: this made all clear. Ever yours affectionately, SYDNEY SMITH.

552.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Aug. 20, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I don't hear a word about the war, but your correspondents are much more likely to be well informed upon this point than mine. There are not two more intelligent men in the kingdom than Wood and Howick; and they write from the great news-market. I mean to go on Tuesday, 27th, to the sea-side, at Sidmouth, with Mrs Sydney, there to stay some days. It is exactly a place to suit you to winter in; so warm, beautiful, and sheltered;—and very good houses for nothing.

I am thinking of writing a pamphlet to urge the necessity of paying the Catholic clergy; but the ideas are all so trite, and the arguments so plain and easy, that I gape at the thoughts of such a production. Lord Grey can have no doubt of the wisdom of paying the Catholic clergy. I should like very much to go to Ireland for a fortnight; I am sure I could learn a great deal in that time; but the indolence, the timidity, and the uncertain health of old age keep me at home.

Don't talk of giving up the world,—we shall all meet again in Berkeley Square. Lady Georgiana will play the harp, the physician will sing, —— will look melancholy, and Lady Caroline will be making shrewd remarks to herself; I shall be all that is orthodox and proper; Lord Grey will be inclined to laugh. God bless you, dear Lady Grey! S. S.

553.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

Combe Florey, Aug. 25, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

I think the enclosed will amuse Lord Carlisle. Mr Wainwright* is known to Morpeth, as well as to myself, and is a most amiable clergyman, who paid a visit to this country two or three years since.

The fact is unknown to any of his congregation, but when in this country he went once to the Opera, and supped with Lord Lyndhurst afterwards. In private, he often wore a short cassock,

* A distinguished minister of the Episcopalian Church, United States, since dead.

like a bishop's, and looked at himself for a long time in the glass. He carried over one of these cassocks to America, that Mrs Wainwright might see him in it.

We are going for a week to Sidmouth, that paradise of the waves. SYDNEY SMITH.

554.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

No date.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

Do not let Morpeth persuade you that Alexis is anything but an impostor. There seems to be something missing in London; and I find, upon reflection, it is Lord Carlisle and yourself.

The Archbishop of York is laid up with a sprained ankle; sprained at a christening! How very singular! It is such a quiescent ceremony, that I thought I might have guaranteed at its celebration all the ligaments of the human body. He is never a moment without a bishop or a dowager duchess coming to call.

What shall I say of my unworthy self, but that I am well, rich, and tolerably healthy? Mrs Sydney has no great illness, though much *malaise*. I hear that Lord Carlisle is wheeled down to the gallery, and gets a little fresh air at the door. I know all the *locale* so well that I see him in his transit, and he takes with him my best and kindest wishes wherever he goes.

Sir Robert Peel and I have made friends; and so you will say, dear Lady Carlisle, that I want to be a bishop. But I thank God often that I am not a bishop; and I want nothing in this world but the friendship and goodwill of such good persons as yourself.

Alas! how short is a sheet of paper! What remains must convey my affection and respect to my excellent friends at Castle Howard. And may God bless them! SYDNEY SMITH.

555.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Sidmouth, Aug. 29, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I think I shall turn out to be right, and that there will be no war immediately. What the scramble for the fragments of the Mahometan empire may produce ultimately in the Mediterranean, I know not; but I would lay a wager we are not at war before Christmas. I offer you a bet of five shillings to that effect; if you think this venture indiscreetly large, Georgiana will, I dare say, take half.

We are at Sidmouth. It is extremely beautiful, but quite deserted. I have nothing to do but to look out of window, and am *ennuied*. The events which have turned up are, a dog and a monkey for a show and a morning concert; and I rather think we shall

have an invitation to tea. I say to every one who sits near me on the marine benches, that it is a fine day, and that the prospect is beautiful; but we get no further. I can get no water out of a dry rock.

There arrived, the other day, at New York, a Sydney Smith.* A meeting was called, and it was proposed to tar-and-feather him; but the amendment was carried, that he should be invited to a public dinner. He turned out to be a journeyman cooper! My informant encloses for me an invitation from the Bishop of the diocese to come and see him, and a proposition that we should travel together to the Falls of Niagara! Ever, dear Lady Grey, affectionately yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

556.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

No date.

I should say, my dear Lady Grey, that, upon the whole, the O'Connell business has not ended unfavourably. The Government has not done anything shabby or timid, but, on the contrary, has acted with spirit. They have been badly served by their law-servants, but that is not their fault. The evil will not end, nor the business be settled without a battle.

Read travels in the East, called "Eöthen." They are by a Mr Kinglake, of Taunton, a chancery barrister, and are written in a lively manner. They will amuse Lord Grey, who, I presume, is read to regularly every day.

God bless you, dear Lady Grey! Kind regards to Lord Grey, of whom I am in weekly hopes of receiving a better account.

SYDNEY SMITH.

557.] TO HIS EXCELLENCY M. VAN DE WEYER.

Combe Florey, Sept. 17, 1844.

Dear Van de Weyer,

Many thanks for your proffered loan of the book from which you took the letters you were so good as to send me, of Alva and Philip; but as I never return books, I make a rule never to borrow them. I shall send the title of the work you have been so kind as to mention to my authoress, and of course there can be no objection to her printing a quotation from the printed work. I have not mentioned your name. I shall not trouble you for any further information on this topic, because I must extricate myself from this lady, who (though clever, and in a situation perfectly independent) I am afraid will bore me. You have so recently suffered this alarm from me, that you will, I am sure, understand how I should fall into similar apprehensions.

I am very sorry you have been and are unwell; you have had

* See Memoir, Chapter VIII.

too much to do. I am (in common with many other gentlemen in orders) suffering from the very opposite cause.

Rumours of wars reach me on every side; my only confidence is, that the Governments on both sides of the water wish for peace.

We are expecting Mrs —— ——, who perhaps has never occurred to you in a rural point of view. I remain, my dear Sir, very truly yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

558.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Sept. 25, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

Lord Grey understands these matters better than I do, but I do not see how the reversal of O'Connell's sentence can injure, morally, the House of Lords. It was (I have no doubt) the honest decision of the majority of those who, from their legal habits, and attention to the case, had a right to decide; and that the lay lords abstained from voting was surely an act of honesty. It shows, however, the absurd constitution of a court of justice, where ninety-nine of the hundred judges are utterly incapable of forming any just opinion of the subject.

I mean to write a pamphlet upon the payment of the Catholic and Presbyterian clergy in Ireland; the honest payment—without any attempt to gain power over them. Their refusal to take it is no conclusive objection, and they would take it *a poco a poco*, if it were honestly given. We must have a regular Ambassador residing at the Court of Rome; patronage must be divided with an even hand between Catholic and Protestant; all their alleged wrongs about land must be impartially examined, and, if just, be speedily redressed; a large army be kept ready for immediate action, and the law be put in force against O'Connell and O'Connellism, in spite of all previous failures. Will Lord Grey or Howick dissent from these obvious principles?

Adieu, dear Lady Grey! SYDNEY SMITH.

559.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 5, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I had a smart attack of giddiness on Tuesday, which alarmed me a good deal. The doctor said it was stomach, and has put me under the most rigid rules; I will try to follow them.

I think "Ireland and its Leaders" worth reading, and beg of you to tell me who wrote it, if you happen to know; for though you call yourself solitary, you live much more in the world than I do, while in the country.

Have you noticed the abuse of St Paul's in the "Times"? I was moved to write, but I kept silence, though it was pain and grief to me. Read Captain Marryat's "Settlers in Canada."

SYDNEY SMITH.

560.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

Combe Florey, Oct. 11, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I rather think that last week they wanted to kill me, but I was too sharp for them. I am now tolerably well, but I am weak, and taking all proper care of myself; which care consists in eating nothing that I like, and doing nothing that I wish. I sent you yesterday the triumph of a fellow-sufferer with Lord Grey. Tell me fairly the effect such a narrative produces upon him. The greatest consolation to me is, to find that others are suffering as much as I do. I would not inflict suffering upon them; I would contribute actively to prevent it; but if it do come after this, I must confess . . . Always affectionately yours, SYDNEY SMITH.

I shall be in London the 22d and 25th.

See what rural life is:—

Combe Florey Gazette.

Mr Smith's large red cow is expected to calve this week.
Mr Gibbs has bought Mr Smith's lame mare.
It rained yesterday, and, a correspondent observes, is not unlikely to rain to-day.
Mr Smith is better.
Mrs Smith is indisposed.
A nest of black magpies was found near the village yesterday.

561.] TO DR HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, October, 1844.

My dear Holland,

I cannot let this post pass over without thanking you for one of the very best letters I ever read, to say nothing of its great kindness. It is a tolerably good day with me to-day; Lyddon says my pulse is better, but I am very weak; I think also my breathing is better. I rather lean to coming up to London. Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

564.] TO DR HOLLAND.

Combe Florey, 1844.

Scale of Dining.

Gruel.	Panada.
Broth.	Mutton-chop.
Pudding.	Roast and boiled.

Dear Holland,—I am only at broth at present, but Lyddon

thinks I shall get to pudding to-morrow, and mutton-chops the next day. I long for promotion. Yours affectionately,

SYDNEY SMITH.

565.] TO THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE.

56 Green Street, Oct. 21, 1844.

My dear Lady Carlisle,

From your ancient goodness to me, I am sure you will be glad to receive a bulletin from myself, informing you that I am making a good progress; in fact, I am in a regular train of promotion: from gruel, vermicelli, and sago, I was promoted to panada, from thence to minced meat, and (such is the effect of good conduct) I was elevated to a mutton-chop. My breathlessness and giddiness are gone—chased away by the gout. If you hear of sixteen or eighteen pounds of human flesh, they belong to me. I look as if a curate had been taken out of me. I am delighted to hear such improved accounts of my fellow-sufferer at Castle Howard. Lady —— is severe in her medical questions; but I detail the most horrible symptoms, at which she takes flight.

Accept, my dear Lady Carlisle, my best wishes for Lord Carlisle and all the family. SYDNEY SMITH.

566.] TO THE COUNTESS GREY.

56 Green Street, Nov. 7, 1844.

My dear Lady Grey,

I have been seriously ill, and I do not think I am yet quite "clear of the wood," but am certainly a good deal better. My complaints have been giddiness, breathlessness, and weakness of the digestive organs. I believe I acted wisely in setting off for London on the first attack; it has secured for me the proximity and best attentions of Dr Holland, and the use of a comfortable house, where a suite of rooms are perfectly fitted up for illness and death.

I have a great notion you can send me better accounts of Lord Grey;—pray do, and give him my earnest and sincere regard.

SYDNEY SMITH.

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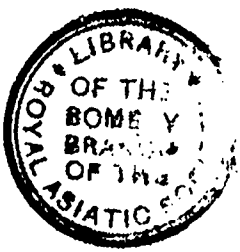

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